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MERRY TALES

E.L. AND A.M. SKINNER

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MERRY TALES

BY

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AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY
NEW YORK CINCINNATI CHICAGO

T65.8395.nw
Educ T759.15.795
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June 12, 1929

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E. P. I

FOREWORD

FROM a knowledge and love of children both extending through many years, I wish to speak of the pleasure and profit they will derive from reading and possessing *Merry Tales.*

To keep children sane and sweet they must be given bright and cheery stories to read. They will find them in *Merry Tales.* Early in life they should learn something of myths and folklore. These tales are founded on these old treasures, but are charmingly adapted to the understanding of present-day children. I have read few books for children possessing such literary value and yet using words that children can master without difficulty, thereby being able to enjoy their own reading.

I hope that *Merry Tales* will find a place not only in the schoolroom for that time of delight in a well-taught school, — "the period for supplementary reading," — but that parents may find the book out to place it in the child's own library, a thing that a child must have if it is ever to have in later life the joys of a genuine booklover.

MARGARET W. SUTHERLAND,
Principal of the Columbus Normal School.

PREFACE

THE stories in this collection have been chosen, first, because they are stories children have always loved, and second, because they are free from much of the grewsome or grotesque which figures in so many of the folk tales and fables of the past. Although there are elements of surprise and danger in the adventures of the various characters, yet each story ends happily. The little book is intended as a supplementary reader for children in the third or fourth year of school and the vocabulary has been carefully graded to meet that need. Some of the stories have dramatic qualities and will be found to lend themselves readily to dramatization.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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To the Grolier Society, publishers of *The Book of Knowledge*, for "How Olaf Brought the Brownie Back";

To George H. Doran Company, for "The Overturned Cart" from *Cap O'Yellow*, by Agnes Crozier Herbertson;

To Frances Fox and The Outlook Company, for "Making the Best of It";

To Elizabeth Grierson and Frederick A. Stokes Company, publishers of *Scottish Fairy Tales*, for "The Brownie of Blednock";

To F. Cushing and G. P. Putnam's Sons for "The Poor Little Turkey Girl" from *Zuñi Folk Tales*; and

To T. Fisher Unwin for "True Friendship."

THE MONKEY AND THE CROCODILE

"IT is no use trying to live here any longer," thought the monkey, looking down, from his home in the tree, at a big crocodile sleeping on the sunlit bank of the river. "Whenever that creature opens his great mouth, I shudder to think what might happen if I were near."

Just then the crocodile yawned. Wider and wider and wider he opened his mouth. Away whisked the monkey to the topmost branch of the tree.

"This very day I shall move farther down the river!" he said.

So the monkey slipped away to a tree about

half a mile distant. There he lived peaceably for some time. He was delighted with his new home. The water was cool and clear. In the middle of the stream was an island covered with fruit trees.

It was very easy to reach the little island. One leap from his tree brought the monkey to the end of a large rock which jutted out into the river; another leap brought him to the island, where he could get a fine feast and frisk about all the day long. In the evening he went back to his home in the great tree on the river's bank.

One day he stayed later than usual on the island. When he came to the water's edge, he looked and blinked and looked and blinked! "How strange that rock looks!" he said to himself. "Surely it was never so high before! What can be the matter with it?" Suddenly the monkey's heart beat very fast. The crocodile was lying on the top of that rock!

"Oho! Mr. Crocodile," thought the monkey, "I see I must put my wits to work

very, very quickly indeed if I am to escape from you!"

"Good evening, Big Rock," he called.

The crocodile lay very still.

"This is a fine evening, Big Rock!" called the monkey.

The crocodile lay very, very still.

"What is the matter, Big Rock? You have always been a good friend of mine. Why are you so silent this evening?"

Then the crocodile thought, "Now I see I must pretend to be the rock, or the monkey may not come this way to-night." So with his mouth shut he mumbled as best he could, "Good evening, Mr. Monkey."

"Oh! Is that you, Mr. Crocodile?" said the monkey, pleasantly. "I'm afraid I have awakened you!"

"Never mind that," said the crocodile, raising his head. "Come, make your leap! You cannot escape me this time."

"No, I'm afraid not," said the monkey, meekly.

And all the time he was thinking, "Croc-

odiles shut their eyes when they open their mouths wide."

"Come along and make haste, Monkey," said the crocodile.

"I'm caught, that is sure, for I must leap your way. Well, as you say, I cannot escape you, Crocodile. Open your mouth. Oh, wider than that, please, if I am to leap into it. Wider! There! Here I go! Ready!"

Before the crocodile knew what was happening, the monkey gave three bounds — first to the top of the crocodile's head, — then to the bank, — then to his tree. Away he whisked to the topmost branch.

"Thank you, Mr. Crocodile," he called.

THE HILLMAN AND THE HOUSE-WIFE

ONE day a hillman knocked at the door of a selfish housewife.

"Can you lend me a saucepan, good mother?" said he. "There's a wedding in the hill, and all the pots are in use."

"Is he to have one?" asked the servant girl who had opened the door.

"Ay, to be sure," said the housewife. But when the maid was taking a saucepan from the shelf, the housewife whispered slyly to her, "Do not lend him a good pan; get the old one out of the cupboard. It leaks, and the hillmen are so neat and such nimble workers that they are sure to mend it before they send it home. So one does a good turn and saves sixpence from the tinker."

The maid fetched the old saucepan which had been laid by till the tinker's next visit and gave it to the dwarf, who thanked her and went away.

The saucepan was soon returned neatly mended and ready for use. At supper time the maid filled the pan with milk and set it on the fire for the children's supper, but in a few minutes the milk was so burned and smoked that no one could touch it. Even the pigs would not drink the wash into which the milk was thrown.

"Ah, you good-for-nothing girl!" cried the housewife as this time she filled the pan herself. "Your careless ways would ruin the richest. There's a whole quart of milk spoiled at once."

"A quart of milk costs twopence!" cried a queer small voice from the chimney corner.

The housewife had not left the saucepan for two minutes when the milk boiled over and was all burned and smoked as before.

"The pan must be dirty," cried the housewife in a rage; "and there are two full quarts

of milk as good as thrown to the dogs. Oh, what dreadful waste!"

"Two quarts of milk cost fourpence!" cried the queer small voice.

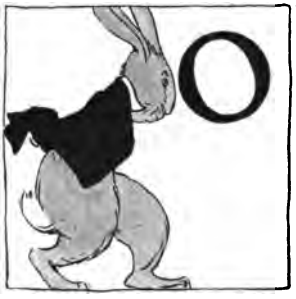
After a long scrubbing, the saucepan was once more filled with milk and set on the fire, but in a little while the milk was burned and smoked again.

The housewife burst into tears at the waste, and cried out, "Never before did such a thing happen to me since I kept house! Three quarts of milk burned for one meal."

"Three quarts of milk cost sixpence!" cried the queer small voice. "You didn't save the tinker after all!"

Then the hillman himself came tumbling down the chimney and went off laughing through the door. But from that time the saucepan was as good as any other.

THE FISHING PARTY



NE clear, warm evening about sunset Brother Rabbit was walking down a road which led to the old mill. He was saying to himself: "It has been a week or more since I have had any fun. I do wish something would happen to make times a little livelier. I'm —"

"A fine sunset, Brother Rabbit! A penny for your thoughts. I do believe you would have passed me without speaking."

"Good evening, Brother Terrapin," said the rabbit, stopping and holding out his hand in a most cordial way. "I am very glad to see you, for I like your opinion immensely. I'll tell you what I was thinking about, my friend. I was planning a little fishing party.

Come, let us sit down here on the roadside and talk it over."

Brother Terrapin replied: "A fishing party! That will be fine sport. We should become very dull indeed in this neighborhood, Brother Rabbit, if it were not for your plans. Have you decided whom to invite?"

"Well," said Brother Rabbit, "I think it unwise to invite too many. Perhaps five, including ourselves, are enough, because, you see, we must keep very quiet, and if the party is large, there is danger of too much merriment. Have you any particular friend who enjoys fishing?"

"Oh, yes, indeed. Brother Bear is very quiet and sensible, and he loves to fish for mud turtles," replied Brother Terrapin.

"Well, I have in mind Brother Fox and Brother Wolf. Look, here they come! What good luck! Let us see what they think about the plan." And the rabbit danced away up the road to meet his friends and tell them about the fishing party.

"Exactly the kind of sport I enjoy most,"

said Brother Wolf, interrupting Brother Rabbit. "I'll fish for hornyheads. Come, Brother Fox, what do you say?"

"First, I wish to thank Brother Rabbit for his kind invitation," said Brother Fox, politely. "Of course, you all know that I shall fish for perch, and I think I shall use a dip net. Good evening, Brother Terrapin. What an interesting party ours will be. What will you fish for?"

"Oh," laughed Brother Terrapin, "minnows suit my taste very well."

"All right," said Brother Rabbit. "Now let us meet at the mill pond about eight o'clock this evening. Brother Terrapin, may I trouble you to bring the bait? The others will each bring a hook and line, and, Brother Fox, please do not forget your fine dip net. About twelve o'clock you are all invited to a fish supper at my house. Don't forget the time and place of meeting. Farewell."

All hurried away to prepare for the evening's amusement, and, at the appointed time, the five merry brothers met at the mill pond.

Brother Rabbit was very anxious to begin;

so he baited his hook and stepped up to the very edge of the water. Then he stopped suddenly, looked straight down into the pond, dropped his fishing pole, and scratched his head.

"Mercy!" said Brother Fox. "What in the world is the matter with Brother Rabbit? Let us slip up to him and see what is the trouble. Come, all together."

But Brother Rabbit turned and walked toward them, shook his head seriously, and said: "No fishing to-night, my friends. We might as well go home."

"What is it? What did you see?" began the bear, the fox, and the wolf. Brother Terrapin crept up to the edge of the pond, looked straight into the water, jumped back, and said, "Tut, tut, tut! To be sure! To be sure!"

"Come, come, tell us. We cannot bear this suspense," snapped the fox.

Then Brother Rabbit said slowly, "The moon has dropped into the mill pond, and if you don't believe me, go and look for yourselves."

"Impossible!" cried Brother Bear.

They all crept up to the edge of the pond and looked in and there they saw the golden moon right down in the clear water.

"Isn't that too bad?" said Brother Wolf.

"Well, well, well," sighed Brother Fox; and Brother Bear shook his head slowly and said, "The impossible has happened!"

"Now, I'll tell you something," began the rabbit, who was not to be easily daunted, "we must get that moon out of the water before we begin to fish. I tell you truly no fish will bite while that great golden ball is near."

"Well, Brother Rabbit," said the wolf, "can't you make a suggestion in this matter? You usually know what to do."

"I have it, my friends," said the rabbit jumping up and down. "I have it! I know where I can borrow a sieve. I'll run and get it and then we can dip up the moon in no time. We'll have our fishing party yet!" and off he ran.

Brother Terrapin was thinking. In a little

while he looked up and said, "My friends, I have often heard that there is a pot of gold in the moon."

"What's that?" said Brother Fox, quickly.

"I was saying that my grandmother has often told me that there is a pot of gold in the moon. But here comes Brother Rabbit with the sieve."

"My good friend," said Brother Fox, "you were kind enough to go after that sieve and now you must let Brother Bear, Brother Wolf, and myself do the work. No, don't take off your coat. You are such a little fellow that it would be dangerous for you to go into the water. You and Brother Terrapin stand here on the bank and watch us. Come, give me the sieve."

So Brother Terrapin and Brother Rabbit stood on the bank and watched the others wade into the pond.

They dipped the sieve down once. "No moon," said Brother Bear.

Again they dipped. "No moon," said Brother Wolf.

"Come," said Brother Fox, "we must go farther in."

"Oh, do be careful, my friends," called the rabbit, "you are near a very deep hole."

Buzz, buzz! The water was roaring in Brother Bear's ears and he shook his head violently. Down went the sieve again.

"No moon," sighed Brother Fox. "A little farther out, friends. Now, down again with the sieve."

Splash! Splash! Splash! Down they all went with the sieve. They kicked and tumbled and splashed as if they would throw all the water out of the mill pond. Then they swam for the shore and all came out dripping wet. "No moon," said Brother Fox, sulkily. "What! No moon? Well, well, well!" said Brother Rabbit.

"Too bad! Too bad!" said Brother Terrapin.

"My friends," said the rabbit, seriously, "I think you ought to go home and put on some dry clothes. I do, indeed. And I hope we shall have better luck next time. Good night."

THE FOREST BAILIFF

ONCE upon a time a peasant owned a cat which was so disagreeable and mischievous that all the neighbors complained about him. Finally the peasant became impatient and said to his wife, "I have decided to get rid of our cat. He is such a nuisance that I feel we ought not to keep him any longer."

"I do not blame you," replied his wife. "My patience, too, is worn out listening to the stories told about that mischievous animal."

In a few days the peasant put the cat into a large sack and walked far into a leafy forest. Then he opened the sack and let the cat bound away. How many interesting things there were in the depths of the beautiful wood!

After wandering about for a few hours the cat began to feel quite at home, especially when he found a little deserted cabin where he took up his abode and dined bountifully on mice and birds.

One day when Master Cat was walking proudly along a path which led to a pond, he met Miss Fox, who looked at him with great interest and curiosity. When she came close enough to be heard, she said, "Your pardon, good sir, but may I ask who you are, and why you are walking in the forest?"

Master Cat raised his head very high and replied proudly: "I am the bailiff of the forest. My name is Ivan, and I have been sent from Siberia to become governor of this vast wood."

"Oh, indeed," said Miss Fox. "Dear Master Bailiff, will you not honor me with your presence at dinner? I shall be most proud to entertain such a distinguished guest."

"Lady, I accept your invitation," replied Master Cat, making a profound bow.

Now Miss Fox knew well how to entertain. She not only provided the greatest delicacies

for her table, but she chatted in the merriest fashion and told the bailiff many interesting things about life in the forest.

"My dear Sir Bailiff, do have another serving of this savory pie. The forest, you know, gives one a good appetite," said she, with a side glance at her visitor.

"Thank you, dear lady," returned Master Ivan. "It is indeed delicious. I have tasted nothing so good for weeks. What a cozy home you have here."

"It is very comfortable," replied Miss Fox. "But I am often a little lonely. May I ask, sir, are you married or single?"

"I am single," replied Mr. Bailiff.

"Why, so am I," said his companion, dropping her eyes shyly. "Master Ivan, the Bailiff, will you not marry me?"

The guest was a little astonished, but he finally consented to marry Miss Fox. Their wedding was attended with much ceremony, and the bailiff came to live in his wife's cozy home.

A few days after their marriage Ivan said:

"Madam, I am very hungry. Go on a little hunting trip and bring me home a fine dinner." Away went the wife toward a deep hollow. She had not gone very far when she met her old friend the wolf.

"Good morning, my dear friend," he began. "I have been looking in vain for you in the forest. Do tell me where you have been."

Madam Fox replied coyly: "Oh, I am married, you know. My husband is the bailiff of the forest."

"Indeed," said the wolf. "How I should like to see his honor, your husband."

"That can be managed if you will follow my advice closely. You see, my husband is very ferocious, and unless you do as I say he might devour you. However, I'll see what can be done. Let me see. You had better get a lamb and place it on our doorstep. Then hide in the bushes which grow near. When my husband opens the door, you can get a very good look at him," said Madam Fox, proudly.

The wolf ran away in search of a lamb, and Madam continued on her way. In a short

time she met a bear. "Good day, my good friend," he said. "I have missed you for some time. May I ask where you have been?"

"Oh," said Madam, "is it possible you have not heard of my marriage with Ivan, the bailiff of the forest?"

"Is it true? Then I offer you my sincere congratulations! The bailiff of the forest, you say?" said the bear, in a puzzled tone. "Madam, it would give me the greatest pleasure to see his honor, your husband."

"Yes," said Madam, "that would be a great privilege, but I must tell you that the bailiff is very fierce. In fact, he is likely to devour anyone who does not please him. But perhaps I can help you out a little. Let me see. You had better procure an ox. And be sure to offer your gift very humbly. The wolf, who is also most anxious to see my husband, is going to bring a lamb for a present."

Away went the bear in search of his gift, which he soon found; then he hurried clumsily along, and in a little while he met the wolf with a lamb.

"Good day to you, my friend," began the wolf. "May I ask where you are going with such a burden?"

"I am going to see the husband of Madam Fox, to whom I shall give this ox. Will you tell me where you are going?" said the bear.

"Why, I am bound for the same place, my friend. Madam Fox told me her husband is terrible. He devours anyone who displeases him, so I am taking a lamb for a present." The wolf's voice trembled a little as he continued, "I do hope he will take kindly to me."

The friends went on their way, and in a short time they came to the house of the cat. The wolf pushed the bear a little ahead and whispered, "Go, my good comrade, knock on the door and say to the husband of Madam Fox that we have brought an ox and a lamb as gifts."

"Oh," shivered the bear, "I dare not! I am so filled with fear. Indeed, indeed, I cannot. You go, good wolf! Do."

"Impossible," returned the wolf, in a quaking voice. "I am trembling all over. I

haven't strength enough to walk there much less to rap on the door. Come, let us hide ourselves and bide our time."

So the wolf hid himself under some dry leaves, and the bear jumped into a tree and carefully hid himself among the branches. In a few moments Madam Fox and her husband, who had been walking in the forest, came home.

"How very small the bailiff is," whispered the wolf.

"He is, indeed," gasped the bear, a little scornfully.

The cat now saw the ox and leaped to the step saying, "Oh, a small meal for me."

"A *small* meal," said the bear, with surprise. "How very, very hungry the bailiff must be! And he is so small, too. Why, a bull is a good meal for four bears. What an immense appetite he must have!"

The wolf was too much frightened to answer. There was a slight rustling sound in the dry leaves and, thinking a mouse was hidden there, the cat gave a bound and fastened his claws

in the snout of the wolf. With a gasp of fear the wolf leaped up and ran away as fast as he could go. Now, the cat was very much afraid of a wolf, and so he gave one leap into the tree where the bear lay hidden. "Oh, mercy, mercy!" cried the bear. "The cat is after me. He will devour me. Oh, help, help!" and down the tree scrambled the bear. Off he ran, as fast as he could go, after the wolf. Madam Fox screamed out: "My husband is terrible! He will devour you! He will devour you!"

Away sped the wolf and the bear, and they told their adventure to the other animals of the forest, who took good care to stay far away from the terrible bailiff. Meanwhile the cat and the fox were very happy, and they had plenty to eat for a long time.

BRUIN AND REYNARD PARTNERS

NCE upon a time Bruin and Reynard were to plant a field in common and to share the crops in a fair way. "If you'll have the root, I'll take the top," said Reynard. Bruin thought that plan would do very well.

The first year they sowed rye. But when they had thrashed out the crop, Reynard got all the grain and Bruin got nothing but roots and rubbish. He did not like that at all, but Reynard said that was how they had agreed to share the crop, and it was fair and right.

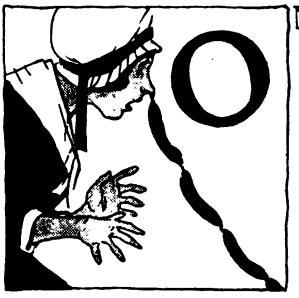
"The tops come to me this year," said Reynard, "but next year it will be your turn. Then you will have the tops and I shall have to put up with the roots."

Spring came and it was time to sow again. Sly Reynard asked Bruin what he thought of sowing turnip seed for the second year's crop.

"Yes, yes," said Bruin, "we will have turnips. Turnips are better food than rye."

Reynard agreed with him. Harvest time came. "We will divide the crops as is fair and right," said Reynard. "I get the roots this time and you get the tops." So Reynard got all the turnip roots and Bruin the turnip tops. When Bruin saw what Reynard had done, he was very angry, and he put an end to his partnership with him at once.

THE THREE WISHES



NCE upon a time in the heart of a forest lived a woodcutter and his wife. They were very poor indeed. Their little cabin, built of rough-hewn logs, had only one room, which was very scantily and poorly furnished. One day the woodcutter said to his wife,

"How miserable we are! We work all day, and we have barely enough food to keep life in our bodies! Surely there are few who work as hard as we do and have so little!"

The housewife replied, "Yes, indeed, we are very miserable."

"Well, I'm off for another day's work," sighed the husband. "My lot is too hard."

He picked up his ax and made his way to

the place in the forest where he was to perform his task. Suddenly, a dear little fairy whose face was wreathed in smiles danced into the path and stood before him.

"I am the wishing fairy," she began. "I heard what you said about your work and your life, and my heart aches for you. Now, because I am a fairy, it is in my power to grant you three wishes. Ask for any three things you desire and your wishes shall be granted." The fairy disappeared in the twinkling of an eye, and the woodcutter was left standing alone in the forest. Was he dreaming? He couldn't believe his own senses! He thought of a thousand wishes all in an instant. He would go home and talk the matter over with his wife. He turned in his path and retraced his steps to the cabin.

"Art thou ill?" demanded his wife, who came to the door.

"Oh, no, indeed, I am not ill; I am very, very happy!" he burst forth. "I met a fairy in the forest. She told me that she was very, very sorry for me, and that she would help me

by granting three wishes. Think of it! Any three wishes in the world will be granted by the charming fairy."

"Wonderful!" responded the housewife.

"Oh, how happy the very thought of it makes me! Come, let us sit down and talk the matter over; for I assure you it is not easy to come to a decision. I am indeed, very, very happy."

They drew up their chairs to the little table and sat down.

"I am *so* hungry," began the woodcutter. "Let us have dinner, and then, while we are eating, we can talk about our wishes and see which three are nearest our hearts' desires."

They began their humble meal immediately, and the husband continued: "Of course one of our wishes must be great riches. What do you say?"

"Oh, yes, indeed," said his wife. "I should love a beautiful house to live in, also carriages and fine clothes, and servants and —"

"Oh, for that matter," said the husband, "we could wish for an empire."

"Or rich jewels, such as great numbers of pearls and diamonds! What a wish that would be," said the wife, whose face was all aglow.

"I have it," burst forth the woodman, "let us wish for a fine large family, five sons and five daughters. What say you to that?"

"Oh!" returned his wife, "I think I prefer six sons and four daughters."

So they continued weighing one wish with another until they seemed almost in despair about coming to a decision regarding which three wishes would be the wisest and best. They finally stopped talking and ate their simple food in silence. The woodcutter did not seem to relish his soup and dry bread.

"Oh," he cried out suddenly, "how I wish I had some nice savory sausage for dinner!" No sooner had the words fallen from his lips than a large dish of fine sausages appeared on the table. What a surprise! The two were so astonished that for a few moments they could not speak. Then the wife said impatiently:

"What do you mean by making such a foolish wish? Do you not see that this dish of sausage means that one wish has been granted and that there are but two left? How could you make such a stupid, stupid wish?"

"Well," replied the husband, "to be sure I have been foolish. I really did not think what I was saying. However, we may still wish for great riches and an empire."

"Humph!" grumbled the wife, "we may wish for riches and an empire, but what about a fine large family? You have certainly been foolish in wishing for that horrid sausage. I suppose, however, you prefer sausage to a fine family;" and she burst out into tears of lamentation, crying: "How could you? How could you be so foolish? Oh, dear! Oh, dear! How very foolish and stupid you have been."

Finally her husband lost all patience and cried out: "I'm tired of your grumbling! I wish the sausage were on the end of your nose!"

In an instant the sausage was fastened to the end of the poor woman's nose. How comical she did look! The husband and wife were so astonished that they could not speak. The poor woman again burst into tears.

"Oh!" she cried. "How could you? How could you? First, you wished for sausage, and second, you wished that the sausage were fastened to my poor nose. It is terrible. It is cruel. Two wishes have been granted. There remains but one! Oh, dear, dear!"

The husband, who now saw what a dreadful mistake he had made, said meekly,

"We may still wish for great riches."

"Riches indeed!" snapped his wife. "Here I am with this great sausage fastened to the end of my nose. What good would riches do me? How ridiculous I am. It is all your fault. I was so happy at the thought of great riches, beautiful jewels, and a fine family, and now I am sad and miserable." She continued to weep so pitifully that her husband's heart was touched.

"I wish with all my heart that the sausage were not on your nose," he said. In an instant the sausage disappeared. There the two sat lamenting; but as the three wishes had been granted there is nothing further to be said.

THE PIGTAIL

THERE lived a sage in days of yore,
And he a handsome pigtail wore;
But wondered much and sorrowed more
Because it hung behind him.

He mused upon the curious case,
And vowed he'd change the pigtail's place,
And have it hanging at his face,
Not dangling there behind him.

Says he, "The mystery I've found.
I'll turn me round," — He turned him round, —
But still it hung behind him.

Then round and round and out and in,
All day the puzzled sage did spin
In vain; it mattered not a pin,
The pigtail hung behind him.

And up and down and in and out
He turned, but still the pigtail stout
Hung dangling there behind him;
And though his efforts never slack,
And though he twist and twirl and tack,
Alas! still faithful to his back
The pigtail hangs behind him.

THE STONE LION

NCE there were two brothers who lived with their mother in a large house on a farm. Their father was dead. The older brother was clever and selfish, but the younger was kind and gentle. The older brother did not like the younger because he was so honest that he never could get the best of a bargain. One day he said to him: "You must go away. I cannot afford to support you any longer."

So the younger brother packed all his belongings, and went to bid his mother good-by. When she heard what the older brother had done, she said, "I will go with you, my son. I will not live here any longer with so hard-hearted a man as your brother."

The next morning the mother and the younger brother started out together. Toward night when they reached the foot of the hill, they came to a hut with nothing in it except an ax which stood behind the door. But they managed to get their supper and stayed in the hut all night.

In the morning they saw that on the side of the hill near the hut was a great forest. The son took the ax, went up on the hillside and chopped enough wood for a load to carry to the town on the other side of the hill. He easily sold it, and with a happy heart brought back food and some clothing to make his mother and himself comfortable.

"Now, mother," he said, "I can earn enough to keep us both, and we shall be happy here together."

One day, in search of timber, the boy went farther up the hill than he had ever gone before. As he climbed up the steep hillside, he suddenly came upon a lion carved from stone.

"Oh," thought the boy, "this must be the guardian spirit of the mountain. I will make

him some offering to-morrow morning without fail."

That night he bought two candles and carried them to the lion. He lighted them, put one on each side of the lion, and asked that his own good fortune might continue.

As he stood there, suddenly the lion opened his great stone mouth and said:

"What are you doing here?"

The boy told him how cruel the elder brother had been; how the mother and himself had been obliged to leave home and live in a hut at the foot of the hill. When he had heard all of the story, the lion said:

"If you will bring a bucket here to-morrow and put it under my mouth, I will fill it with gold for you."

The next day the boy brought the bucket.

"You must be very careful to tell me when it is nearly full," said the lion, "for if even one piece of gold should fall to the ground, great trouble would be in store for you."

The boy was very careful to do exactly as the lion told him, and soon he was on his way

home to his mother with a bucketful of gold. They were so rich now that they bought a beautiful farm and went there to live.

At last the hard-hearted brother heard of their good fortune. He had married since his mother and brother had gone away, so he took his wife and went to pay a visit to his younger brother. It was not long before he had heard the whole story of their good fortune, and how the lion had given them all the gold.

"I will try that, too," he said.

He and his wife went to the same hut his brother had lived in, and there they passed the night.

The next morning he started out with a bucket to visit the stone lion. When he had told the lion his errand, the lion said:

"I will grant your wish, but you must be very careful to tell me when the bucket is nearly full; for if even one little piece of gold touches the ground, great misery will surely fall upon you."

Now the elder brother was so greedy that

he kept shaking the bucket to get the gold pieces closer together. And when the bucket was full he did not tell the lion, as the younger brother had done, for he wanted all he could possibly get.

Suddenly one of the gold pieces fell upon the ground.

"Oh," cried the lion, "a big piece of gold is stuck in my throat. Put your hand in and get it out. It is the largest piece of all."

The greedy man thrust his hand at once into the lion's mouth and the lion snapped his jaws together! And there the man stayed, for the lion would not let him go. And the gold in the bucket turned into earth and stones.

When night came and the husband did not return, the wife became anxious and went out to search for him. At last she found him with his arm held fast in the lion's mouth. He was tired and cold and hungry.

"Alas!" she said, "I wish we had not tried to get the gold. There is no food in the hut for us and we shall have to die."

The lion was listening to all that was said,

and he was so pleased at their misfortune that he began to laugh at them, "Ha, ha, ha!" As he laughed, *he opened his mouth* and the greedy man *quickly* drew out his hand, before the lion had a chance to close his jaws again. They were glad enough to get away, and they went to their brother's house once more. The brother was sorry for them and gave them enough money to buy a home.

The younger brother and his mother lived very happily in their beautiful home, but they always remembered the Stone Lion on the hillside, who gave them their good fortune.

THE STORY THAT HAD NO END

ONCE upon a time there was a king who was so fond of hearing stories told that he would listen to them all day long. He cared for no other kind of amusement and he was always angry when the story came to an end. "Your stories are too short," he said to the many story-tellers who tried to amuse him. Indeed no one had ever been found who was able to tell him a story that lasted long enough.

All the people of his court had tried again and again to please him. Some had told stories that lasted three months, some had told stories that lasted six months, and a few courtiers had been able to carry on their stories for one whole year. Still the king com-

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plained, for sooner or later the story was sure to come to an end.

At last he sent out the following proclamation to all the people of his kingdom:

PROCLAMATION

TO THE MAN WHO WILL TELL ME A STORY WHICH SHALL LAST FOREVER, I WILL GIVE THE PRINCESS, MY DAUGHTER, IN MARRIAGE; ALSO, I WILL MAKE THE SUCCESSFUL ONE MY HEIR AND HE SHALL BE KING AFTER ME. BUT MARK, LET NO MAN PRETEND THAT HE CAN DO SO, AND FAIL; FOR, IF THE STORY COMES TO AN END, THE STORY-TELLER SHALL BE THROWN INTO PRISON. THE KING.

The king's daughter was a very beautiful princess, and there were many suitors in the kingdom who came to the court in hope of winning such a prize. But it was all of no use. Each tried as hard as he could to spin the story out, but sooner or later it came to an end and the unfortunate one met the fate the king had threatened.

This grieved the princess very much, and each time she begged the king to lighten the punishment of the poor story-teller who had risked so much for her sake.

At last one man sent word to the king that he had a story which would last forever and ever, and that he was ready to come to the court at once. On hearing this the princess sent for the man and warned him of his danger. She begged him not to be so rash as to try the king's patience, for no one had ever pleased his majesty, and she feared he would meet the fate of all those who had tried and failed. But he said he was not afraid, and he asked to be taken at once before the king.

"So you are the man who is to tell me a story that will have no end?" said the king.

"If it please your majesty," answered the man.

"If you can do this, you shall be king after me, and you shall marry the princess, my daughter. But if you fail, you shall be cast into prison."

"I understand, O king. I have a story about locusts which I shall be pleased to tell you."

"Very well. Begin the story."

The story-teller began his tale.

"O king, there was once a ruler who was a great tyrant. He wished to be the richest in the land, so he seized all the corn and grain in his kingdom and had it stored away. Year after year he did this until all his granaries were filled full. But one year there came a swarm of locusts and they discovered where all the grain had been stored. After a long search, they found near the top of the granary a very small hole that was just large enough for one locust at a time to pass through. So one locust went in and carried off one grain of corn; then another locust went in and carried off one grain of corn; then another locust went in and carried off one grain of corn; then another locust went in and carried off one grain of corn—"

Thus the story-teller went on day after day, week after week, from morning till night. After hearing about the locusts for nearly a year the king became rather tired of them, patient though he was, and one day he interrupted the story-teller with:

"Yes, yes, we've had enough of those locusts. Let us take for granted that they got all the grain they wanted. Now go on with the story. What happened afterwards?"

"If it please your majesty, I cannot tell you what happened afterwards until I have told you all that took place in the beginning. I go on with the story. Then another locust went in and carried off one grain of corn; then another locust went in and carried off one grain of corn."

Another month passed by. At the end of this time the king asked impatiently, "Come, sir, how long will it take those locusts to carry away all the corn?"

"O king, I cannot tell. They have cleared away but a small space round the inside of the hole, and there are still thousands and thousands of locusts on the outside. Have patience, O king, there are enough grains for each locust to have one, and in time they, no doubt, will all pass in and each in turn carry away one grain of corn. Permit me, O king, to go on with my story.

Then another locust went in and carried off one grain of corn; then another locust went in and carried off one grain of corn —"

"Stop, stop," called out the king at last. "I cannot stand those locusts any longer. Take my kingdom, be king after me, marry my daughter, take everything, only never let me hear about those ridiculous locusts again."

So the story-teller married the princess and succeeded to the throne upon the death of the king.

THE KING'S RABBIT KEEPER

ONCE upon a time a king wanted a good rabbit keeper. He made it known throughout the country that he would give not only good pay, but also the hand of the princess, to any youth who could take good care of his wonderful rabbits.

Now it happened that an old farmer had three very lazy sons, Jan, Hans, and Olaf. They disliked the work on the farm and spent most of their time amusing themselves, or doing as they pleased. When Jan heard that the king wanted a rabbit keeper, he told his father he would go to the palace and try to get the place.

"What!" cried the old man. "The king

does not want an idler. The rabbits are brisk and lively and need care every moment. A lazybones like you could never be His Majesty's rabbit keeper."

"Well, I am determined to go. I should like the work better than the farm drudgery," replied Jan. He filled a bag with things to eat, and a few clothes, and started to the palace of the king. After he had traveled a few miles he heard a voice calling him: "Help! Help!" Jan hurried toward the sound and came to a deep pit. He looked down into it, and there was a shriveled old woman. She spoke very sharply to him. "Pull me up! Pull me up!" she cried. "I have been here for one year, and have had no food in all that time. Pull me up!"

"Not I," replied Jan. "Only a witch could live a year in such a place without food. I'll have nothing to do with you," and on he went.

At length he came to the palace of the king and asked to serve as rabbit keeper. The delighted king said, "He who guards

the rabbits well and lets none escape shall have fine food, good pay, and perhaps the hand of a beautiful princess."

The next day Jan took the rabbits into a large field to browse. During the daytime they nibbled the tender grass and stayed together, but when the sun began to set, they darted toward a wood which bordered a meadow and they soon became lost in the shadows of the trees. Jan called to them and ran after them until he was out of breath, but he could not bring them together. He rested awhile and tried again. It was of no use; they had scattered in every direction. Surely they were playing hide and seek, and Jan was not in the game. When he reached the palace, he told his story to the king, who burst into a rage and banished Jan from the country.

In a short time the king got another warren of rabbits and again made it known that he wanted a keeper. Jan's brother, Hans, now determined that he would try to serve the king and perhaps gain the rich reward. Off he ed. He passed the pit and heard the old

woman calling for help, but he hurried on without even stopping to see what was the matter with her.

The king made him keeper of the rabbits, but the first time he took them out to browse he failed in his work. All was well during the day, but when the sun sank, the rabbits scurried away to the woods, and no matter what he did, Hans could not gather them together again. When he returned to the palace without a single rabbit, the furious king banished him, too, from the country.

A third time the king got beautiful rabbits and made it known that he wanted a keeper. "Father," said Olaf, the youngest of the three brothers, "it is my turn to try. I am sure I could guard the king's rabbits."

"It will be the same old story," said the farmer. "If you take no better care of the rabbits than you do of the calves, you will share your brothers' fate."

"At any rate I mean to try," replied Olaf. Throwing his bag over his shoulder, he set out for the palace of the king.

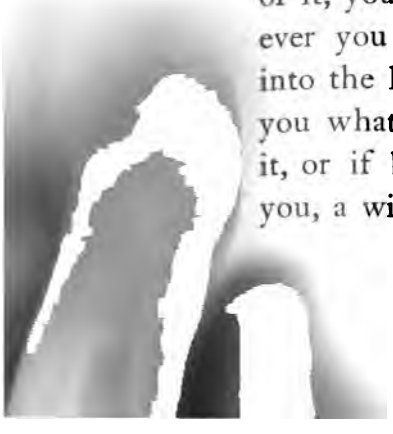
"Help! Help!" called a voice from the field near the road. Olaf ran in the direction of the sound and saw the old woman in the pit.

"What can I do for you, my good woman?" he asked.

"Please reach me your hand and help me out. I've had nothing to eat for a year and I can't get out without help."

Olaf willingly reached down and pulled the old woman up. Then he gave her food from his bag and brought her water from a spring. She ate a large share of Olaf's store while he good-naturedly looked on. When she had finished, she drew from her pocket a magic horn.

"Take this for your pains," said she. "It is a wonderful horn and will help you in many ways. If you blow into the small end of it, you will scatter to the four winds whatever you wish away from you. If you blow into the large end of it, you will bring near you whatever you wish. If you should lose it, or if by chance it should be stolen from you, a wish will bring it back again."



"A wonderful help it will be to me," said Olaf, as he took it eagerly from the old woman's hand.

He sauntered on again, and after some time he came to the palace of the king. The rabbits were put into his charge, and Olaf's heart beat high when he thought of the princess he might win.

The next morning he took the rabbits out into the meadow. They danced about in high glee for several hours. But about noon, Olaf noticed two of them scamper away to the woods. These two were soon followed by others. "Very well," said Olaf, "go away from me if you like." He blew into the small end of the magic horn, and then cried out, "Be off, every one of you!" and away they scattered in every direction.

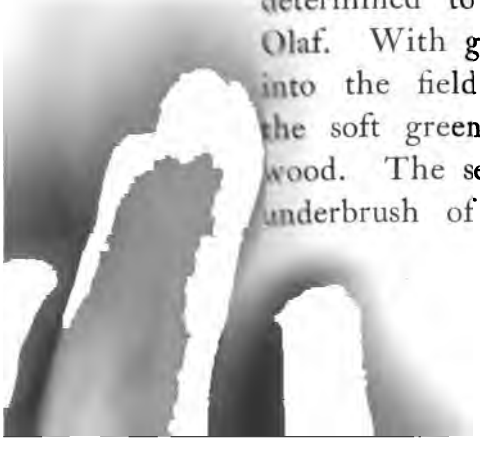
Olaf then ate his noonday lunch and stretched himself out for a nap on the soft green bank. When he awoke, the sun was low in the west. He took up the magic horn and blew into the large end of it. From every direction came the frisky rabbits danc-

ing and hopping about him. Olaf counted them and was well pleased to find exactly the right number. When he reached the palace with the rabbits, he saw that the king, the queen, and the princess were on the lookout for him. Also he noticed that each one counted the rabbits and then glanced at the others in wonder.

"Alas!" sighed the princess, "how I wish he were of noble birth! But a farmer's lad! Dear me!"

Day after day Olaf took the rabbits out to browse in the meadow. At noon he scattered them in the deep wood, and when the sun began to sink behind a distant hill, he gathered them together and led them back to the palace.

The king was very much puzzled and determined to send a servant to spy upon Olaf. With greatest care the servant slipped into the field and noticed Olaf asleep on the soft green bank near the edge of the wood. The servant hid himself in the low underbrush of the wood and waited until



evening. At sunset, Olaf awoke, drew out his magic horn, gathered together the rabbits, and led them back to the palace. The servant explained to the king what he had seen, and the king told his queen and the princess. "I shall steal his horn while he is asleep in the meadow," said the princess, "for I am determined not to marry a common farmer's son."

The next day she stole carefully to Olaf's side while he lay asleep and took the magic horn from his pocket. She had not reached the palace before Olaf awoke and thought of his rabbits. But where was his horn? He searched about the banks in vain. "Oh, how I wish I had my magic horn!" he cried. No sooner had he made his wish than he found the horn in his hands. He blew into the larger end of it and again the rabbits danced and frisked about him ready to return.

Now the queen thought she would try her skill in getting Olaf's horn. She had no trouble in getting it from his pocket, but

as she neared the palace, the horn slipped away from her. In the evening, Olaf returned with his flock as usual.

"I see that I must do the thing myself," muttered the king. "That farmer's lad shall not outwit me. I'll tie the horn in one of my hunting bags to make sure of it."

Anxiously the queen and princess awaited the king's return. At last he came, untied the bag, and reached in for the horn. Alas! it had disappeared. And there in the distance came Olaf and the rabbits. The king sent word for Olaf to appear before the royal family. "Tell me about that horn of yours. Where did you get it? Hasn't it magic power?" said the king, impatiently.

"Sire, it is a magic horn," began Olaf.

"Prove it," said the king.

"I would rather not," said Olaf.

"Do as I bid you, without a word!" roared the king, becoming red with anger.

Olaf raised the little end of his horn to his lips and blew a strong blast, while secretly

he made a wish. In a moment the royal family scattered in all directions.

"Bring us back! Bring us back! How dare you? I'll have you punished for this!" roared the king, as he tumbled into the distance.

Olaf blew into the big end of his horn and instantly the royal family were back at the palace. The king, in a rage, tried to seize Olaf, but just then the rabbit keeper raised the small end of the horn to his lips.

"Hold, hold!" cried the king. "I will do you no harm if you will keep that wicked horn from your lips. I would rather give up half my kingdom than take another flighty trip. You are a wonderful lad and the best of rabbit keepers. The reward is yours."

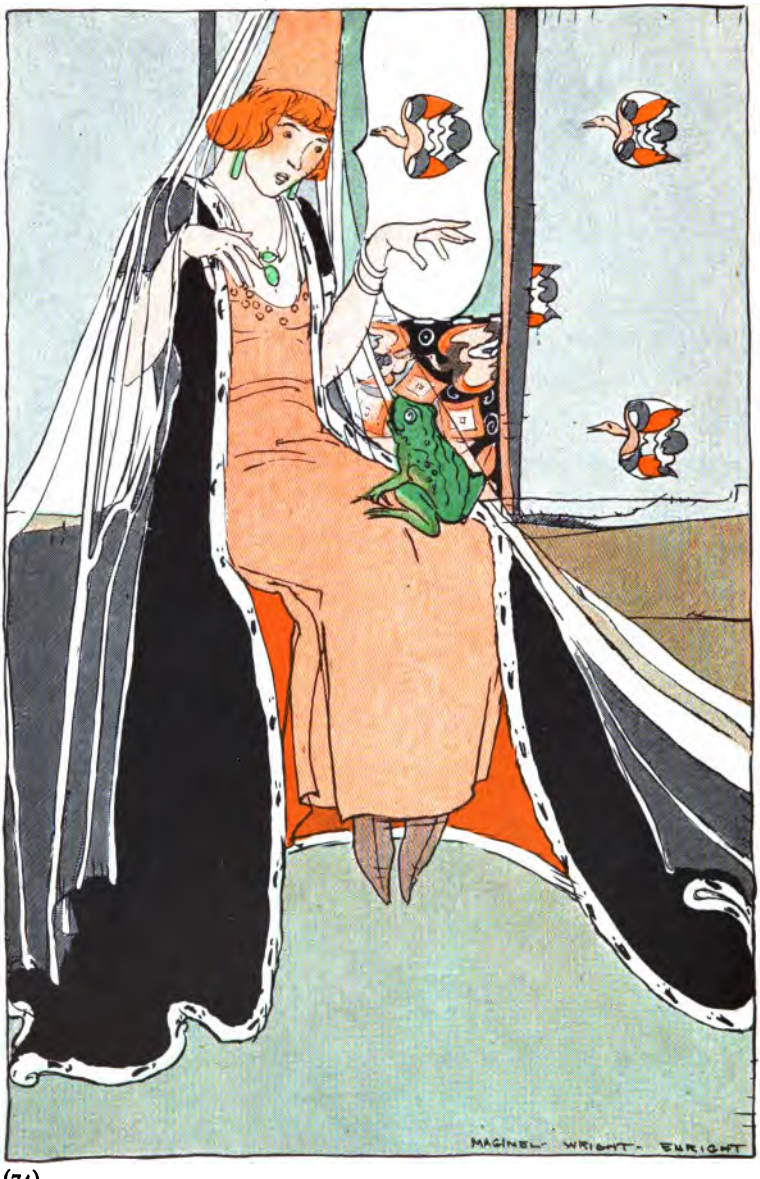
In a short time there was a beautiful wedding at the palace. Olaf had won the princess.

THE LEAPING MATCH

A FLEA, a grasshopper, and a frog once wanted to see which one of them could jump the highest. So they made a festival and invited the whole world and everybody else besides, who would like to come, to see the frolic. When the people assembled to see the contest they all admitted that these three famous jumpers were indeed well worth seeing.

"I will give the princess, my daughter, to the one who can jump the highest," said the king. "The champion in such a trial of skill must be rewarded."

The flea was the first to come forward. His manners were perfect and he bowed to the company on every side, for noble blood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flowed in his veins; and, besides, he had been accustomed to associating with human beings, which was much to his advantage.

The grasshopper came next. The green uniform, which he always wore, set off his figure very well. He carried himself with great dignity, for he belonged to a very old Egyptian family, he said, and was highly thought of in the house in which he lived.

In fact when he was brought out of the fields he was put into a card house, three stories high. The colored sides of the cards were turned in and the doors and windows were cut out of the Queen of Hearts. "It was built on purpose for me," he said, "and I sing so well that sixteen crickets who had chirped all their life, and still had no card house to live in, were so angry at hearing me that they grew thinner than they ever had been before."

In this way the flea and the grasshopper went on with their long praises, each thinking himself quite an excellent match for the princess.

The frog said nothing, but his silence only made the people think he knew a great deal, and the house dog who sniffed at him walked away with an air of approval.

The old counselor who had issued three orders for keeping quiet, said at last, that the frog was a prophet, for one could tell from his back whether the coming winter would be severe or mild. Such wisdom could never be gained from the back of the man who writes almanacs.

"I shall say nothing," said the king, "but I have my own opinion; for I see everything."

And now the leaping match began. The flea jumped first. He jumped so high that no one could see what had become of him. So the people said he did not jump at all. How shameful it was of him after all his boasting!

The grasshopper jumped only half as high; but he jumped right into the king's face. This act the king thought extremely rude.

The frog stood still for a long time; some

began to think that he did not mean to jump at all.

"Perhaps he's ill," said the house dog; so he went up to sniff at the frog again; when "pop" he made a side jump which landed him right into the lap of the princess, who was sitting on a little golden stool.

"There is nothing in the world higher than my daughter," called out the king. "The frog has made the highest jump that can be made. Only one who has a good mind could have done anything so clever as that." And so the leaping frog won the princess.

"I jumped the highest," said the flea, "in spite of what the king said, but the decision does not matter to me. The princess may have that heavy, stiff-legged, ugly creature if he's to her taste. Dullness and heaviness win in this stupid world. I'm too light and airy." So the flea went into foreign lands.

The grasshopper sat down upon a green bank and thought about the world and its ways. "Yes," he said to himself, "dullness

and heaviness do win in this stupid world. People care most about fine looks nowadays." Then he began to sing in the grasshopper way; and from his song we have taken this little story.

THE CLEVER TURTLE

A TURTLE lay upon a large rock sunning himself. His eyes were turned toward the palace of the king which overlooked the beautiful river. He could hear the merry voices of the little princes playing in the royal courtyard.

"What happy times they have!" thought the turtle. "I have heard that there is a lovely little lake in the princes' playground, where they have fine fun, swimming and sailing tiny boats. How dull it is living out here on the rocks! I'm sure I should be happier if I lived in a royal courtyard."

At that moment the turtle was startled by the voices of two men who were carrying fishing nets and large buckets to the river.

He slipped under the rock and lay very still and listened.

"You see," said one of the men, "we are to put the fishes into the courtyard lake and surprise the young princes. His majesty, the king, heard them wish that fishes swam in their lake, and he decided to surprise them."

"How happy they will be in the morning!" replied the other man. "Come, let us climb to the edge of these rocks and throw our nets into the river. Then we will draw them in, empty the fishes into those buckets, and carry them to the courtyard lake this evening."

When the turtle heard that some of his neighbors were to live in the royal courtyard, he was very jealous indeed!

"Fishes are such stupid creatures!" he said to himself. "How much more delight a turtle would give those young princes. I'll not live on this rock any longer. I'll slip very quietly into one of those buckets, and the men will carry me into the royal courtyard. They will never notice me. Fishes for the delight of royalty! It is absurd!"

The next morning the little princes took their sailboats and ran to the lake in the courtyard.

"See, see!" cried one of them. "Our wish has come true! There are fishes swimming about in the water. Oh, what fun!"

"Come away! Come, come, brother!" shouted the other little prince in terror. "See, there is a demon on the bank! Perhaps the fishes belong to him! Come!"

To the turtle's great surprise off ran the lads, crying out, "A demon has come to live on the bank of our lake!"

When the king saw how frightened the princes were, he ordered an attendant to capture the demon and bring him to the palace. So, before the poor turtle could make up his mind what to do, he was caught and brought before the king.

"How shall we kill him?" asked an attendant.

"Throw him into the fire," said one.

"Drop a large rock on his head and crush him," said another.

"Oh, that would not do," said one of the princes. "See! He has pulled his head inside that shell back of his. Perhaps his back is too strong to be crushed by a rock."

"I have it," said an old servant who was afraid of the water, "let us fling him over the rocks into the river. Then he will be swept away into the sea and drowned."

In a twinkling out came the turtle's head.

"My friends," he said, "pray do not throw me into the river that flows to the great wide sea! Of all your plans to punish me, that is the worst! Burn me, or crush me if you will, but do not throw me into the river that flows to the great wide sea! I shudder at the thought of it."

"Take the demon to the rocks and throw him into the river," said the king.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the turtle when he whirled about in the water and swam back to the friendly rocks where he had lived so long.

ROBIN GOODFELLOW

FROM Oberon, in fairy land,
The king of ghosts and shadows there,
Mad Robin, I, at his command,
Am sent to view the night sports here.
What revel rout
Is kept about
In every corner where I go,
I will o'ersee
And merry be,
And make good sport, with ho, ho, ho!

More swift than lightning can I fly
About this airy welkin soon;
And, in a minute's space, descry
Each thing that's done below the moon.
There's not a hag
Or ghost shall wag

Or cry, 'ware goblins! where I go;
  But, Robin, I,
  Their feats will spy
And send them home with ho, ho, ho!

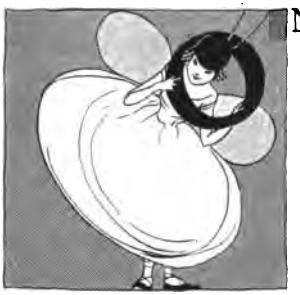
Whene'er such wanderers I meet,
As from their night sports they trudge home,
With counterfeiting voice I greet,
And call them on with me to roam;
  Through woods, through lakes,
  Through bogs, through brakes,
Or else, unseen, with them I go,
  All in the nick
  To play some trick,
And frolic it, with ho, ho, ho!

Sometimes I meet them like a man,
Sometimes an ox, sometimes a hound;
And to a horse I turn me can,
To trip and trot about them round.
  But if to ride,
  My back they stride,
More swift than wind away I go,
  O'er hedge and lands
  Through pools and ponds
I hurry laughing, ho, ho, ho!

By wells and rills in meadows green
We nightly dance our heyday guise;
And to our fairy King and Queen
We chant our moonlight minstrelsies.
When larks 'gin sing
Away we fling;
And babes new born steal as we go;
And elf in bed,
We leave instead,
And wend us, laughing ho, ho, ho!

From hag-bred Merlin's time have I
Thus nightly revel'd to and fro;
And for my pranks men call me by
The name of Robin Goodfellow.
Fiends, ghosts, and sprites
Who haunt the nights,
The hags and goblins do me know;
And beldames old
My feats have told,
So *vale*, *vale*, ho, ho, ho!

MERLIN'S CRAG



ONE evening the master of a fine estate and a farm laborer were walking over the fields. The master said, "To-morrow I want the peat cut from yonder crag, which rises at the end of the moorland."

"Do you mean Merlin's Crag, master?" asked the laborer.

"You have been here but a short time. How did you learn that name?" said the master in surprise.

"One of the old servants told me about it, sir. He said that long, long ago an enchanter named Merlin lived there. And, master, there is a haunted cave under the crag where —"

"Nonsense! Pay no attention to the

stories servants tell, but see to it that the peat is cut to-morrow," said the owner impatiently.

The next afternoon the laborer began to cut the peat which covered the curiously shaped crag. He was about to lift up a piece of turf when, suddenly, there appeared before him the daintiest little creature he had ever seen. She was twelve inches tall and was dressed in a gown of sparkling green. She wore red stockings and dainty red sandals with jeweled buckles. On her head was a tiny, dazzling coronet. Her lovely golden hair rippled down under the crown and over her shoulders.

The laborer stopped his work and in amazement gazed silently at this exquisite little queen. She raised her tiny wand in warning and said in a silvery small voice:

"Now tell me, pray, what would you think if I should send one of my people to unroof your home? I am out of patience with you mortals! I am, indeed. You are selfish creatures. You do anything that pleases you and you consider no one but yourselves."

Here she stamped her tiny sandaled foot and continued, "Now listen to me! Put back that turf this instant, or I declare you shall rue the day that you disturbed the roof of Merlin's Crag." Then she vanished.

The poor bewildered laborer could hardly believe his senses. He put back the turf exactly where it belonged, took up his spade, and went back to his master.

"Why, where is the peat?" began the landlord.

"O master," said the poor man, "the fairies live in Merlin's Crag! I have seen the queen, and she warned me not to take the turf from the top. May I cut the peat from the other side of the moor?"

"What do you mean? I believe your senses are wandering, or you would not say such stupid things," replied the master. "Go back immediately and cut all the peat from Merlin's Crag. Even if the old wizard himself appears, you must do as I command."

The poor laborer was obliged to obey, so he went back to the crag and cut the peat.

His heart beat very fast, for every minute he expected the fairy to reappear and upbraid him, but strange to say, nothing of the kind happened.

Exactly one year from the day when the peat was cut from the top of Merlin's Crag, the laborer started on his way home across the fields. The master had given him a present of a can of milk and some cheese for his wife and children; so he whistled a merry tune as he hurried along. In the distance he noticed the queerly-shaped outline of Merlin's Crag against a pale amber sky and his thoughts wandered back to the day one year ago. How strange that he had never again seen the exquisite little fairy! What a funny threat she had made! As he drew near the crag he began to feel strangely tired. He seemed to drag his leaden feet, and his eyelids grew heavier and heavier.

"I must rest a bit," he thought. "How long the road seems this evening!" So he sat down in a shadow near the crag and fell into a deep sleep.

When he awoke, the soft silvery moonlight

flooded the fields, and he heard distinctly the village bell striking the midnight hour. Then there floated to his ears the happiest ripple of laughter. He rubbed his eyes and aroused himself. He heard a sweet, small voice singing:

"Come, follow, follow me
Ye fairy elves that be,
Which circle on the green,
Come follow Mab, your queen;
Hand in hand, let's dance around,
For the place is fairy ground."

And a fairy chorus answered:

"O'er tops of dewy grass
So nimbly do we pass,
The young and tender stalk
Ne'er bends when we do walk;
Yet in the morning may be seen
Where we the night before have been."

Ringed about him was a host of dainty fairies singing and dancing, and laughing and pointing wee elfin fingers at him as if he were the funniest object in the whole world. What could it all mean?

He determined to break through their circle and make for home, but, when he rose and tried to walk away, the magic green ring and the dancing fairies accompanied him and held him prisoner. How the wee folks enjoyed his dilemma! They fairly shrieked with laughter. In a little while the queen, whom he had met before, danced forward and said slyly, "Wilt thou not tread a measure, O mortal? Come, thou mayest have our loveliest maiden for a partner. Join our sport, do. Then thou wilt not be so eager to depart."

She waved her wand to the circle of fairies, and a charming little creature flitted up to him. Before the poor man realized what was happening the wee dancer took one of his fingers in each of her tiny hands and away they went, swinging, whirling, waltzing about in the gayest manner. The little people shrieked again and again with elfin laughter at the sight of this strange couple treading a measure. All night long the merriment continued.

Finally the moon set behind the dark crag, and rosy streaks broke through the gray

curtain in the east. Then the queen held up her tiny wand and said, "Come, the cock is welcoming the dawn." She led the way and the other fairies forced our friend to accompany them. As she drew near the crag a mysterious door opened and the fairies trooped through into a beautiful hall carpeted with velvet moss and dimly lighted by glow-worms. On tiny couches the wee people soon fell asleep. Our friend the countryman sat on a fragment of rock in the corner of the hall.

When the fairies woke each went about some special task. Some mixed wonderful colors for flower petals, birds' eggs, and delicate shells, others powdered gold dust for pollen and spun gossamer threads, while still others mixed the most delicious odors for violets, wild roses, and hyacinths.

The countryman was so charmed with the sight that he desired nothing more than the joy of watching these elfin people forever. Toward evening the queen touched his arm with her wand and said,

"Your punishment is over."

"What do you mean?" asked our friend.

She replied, "The turf you cut from the roof of Merlin's Crag has grown again. Once more the roof of our hall is whole. You may go back to your friends now. But first you must take a solemn oath that you will never disclose to mortal ears where you have been, or what you have seen. Do you promise?"

"I promise," said the countryman.

Then the fairy led the way to the cave's door which opened of its own accord, and he passed out into the fields.

As he made his way to the village, he noticed that the people looked at him in astonishment. When he reached his cottage his wife, who came to the door, drew back in fear and wonder.

"Is it indeed you, my husband?" she cried out. "Where have you been so long?"

"So long?" the dazed countryman echoed. "So long? What do you mean? I don't understand. Where are the children?"

"There they are," said his wife, pointing to a well-grown boy and girl. "You have been gone from us seven years. No wonder you do not know us."

"Seven years!" he exclaimed. "Seven years do you say? Let me think."

Then suddenly he knew what the fairy queen meant by his punishment. He had been imprisoned seven long years by the wee folk of fairyland.

He was besieged with questions when the village people learned about his return, but he shook his head and said nothing.

He never explained the mystery of his long absence, but many noticed that there was one name which always made him hasten to change the subject, and that name was — Merlin's Crag.

THE STORY OF LI'L' HANNIBAL

ONCE on a time, 'way down South, there lived a little boy named Hannibal, Li'l' Hannibal. He lived along with his gran'mammy and his gran'daddy in a li'l' one-story log cabin that was set right down in a cotton field. Well, from morning until night, Li'l' Hannibal's gran'-mammy kept him toting things. As soon as he woke up in the morning it was:

"Oh, Li'l' Hannibal, fetch a pine knot and light the kitchen fire."

"Oh, Li'l' Hannibal, fetch the teakettle to the well and get some water for the tea."

"Oh, Li'l' Hannibal, mix a li'l' hoecake for your gran'daddy's brea'fus'."

"Oh, Li'l' Hannibal, take the bunch of

turkeys' feathers and dust the ashes off the hearth."

And from morning until night, Li'l' Hannibal's gran'daddy kept him toting things, too.

"Oh, Li'l' Hannibal," his gran'daddy would say, "fetch the corn and feed the turkeys."

"Oh, Li'l' Hannibal, take your li'l' ax and chop some lightwood for gran'mammy's fire."

"Oh, Li'l' Hannibal, run 'round to the store and buy a bag of flour."

"Oh, Li'l' Hannibal, fetch your basket and pick a li'l' cotton off the edge of the field."

So they kept poor little Hannibal toting 'most all day long, and he had only four or five hours to play.

Well, one morning when Li'l' Hannibal woke up, he made up his mind to something. Before they could ask him to light the kitchen fire, or fill the teakettle, or mix the hoecake, or dust the hearth, or feed the turkeys, or chop any wood, or go to the store, or pick any cotton, he had made up his mind that he was not going to tote for his gran'mammy and

his gran'daddy any longer. He was going to run away!

So Li'l' Hannibal got out of bed very quietly. He put on his li'l' trousers, and his li'l' shirt, and his li'l' suspenders, and his li'l' shoes — he never wore stockings. He pulled his li'l' straw hat down tight over his ears, and then Li'l' Hannibal ran away!

He went down the road past all the cabins. He went under the fence and across the cotton fields. He went through the pine grove past the schoolhouse, stooping down low — so the schoolmistress couldn't see him — and then he went 'way, 'way off into the country.

When he was a long way from town, Li'l' Hannibal met a possum loping along by the edge of the road, and the possum stopped and looked at Li'l' Hannibal.

"How do? Where you goin', Li'l' Hannibal?" asked the possum.

Li'l' Hannibal sat down by the side of the road and took off his straw hat to fan himself, for he felt quite warm, and he said,

"I done run away, Br'er Possum, my gran'-

mammy and my gran'daddy kept me totin', totin' for them all the time. I don't like to work, Br'er Possum."

"Po' Li'l' Hannibal!" said the possum, sitting up and scratching himself. "Any special place you bound for?"

"I don't reckon so," said Li'l' Hannibal, for he was getting tired, and he had come away without any breakfast.

"You come along with me, Li'l' Hannibal," said the possum; "I reckon I kin take you somewhere."

So the possum and Li'l' Hannibal went along together, the possum loping along by the side of the road and Li'l' Hannibal going very slowly in the middle of the road, for his shoes were full of sand and it hurt his toes. They went on and on until they came, all at once, to a sort of open space in the woods and then they stopped. There was a big company there—Br'er Rabbit and Br'er Partridge, and Br'er Jay Bird and Br'er Robin, and Ol' Miss Guinea Hen.

"Here's po' Li'l' Hannibal come to see

you," said the possum. "Li'l' Hannibal done run away from his gran'mammy and gran'-daddy."

Li'l' Hannibal hung his head as if he was ashamed, but nobody noticed him. They were all as busy as they could be, and so he just sat down on a pine stump and watched them.

Each one had his own special work and he was keeping at it right smart. Br'er Robin was gathering all the holly berries from the south side of the holly tree and singing as he worked:

"Cheer up, cheer-u-up!"

Br'er Partridge was building a new house down low in the bushes. As he hurried back and forth with twigs, he would stop and drum a little, he felt so happy to be busy.

Br'er Jay Bird was taking corn down below. You know that is what Br'er Jay Bird does all the time. He takes one kernel of corn in his bill to the people down below and then comes back for another. It is a very long trip to take with one kernel of corn, but

Br'er Jay Bird doesn't seem to mind how hard he works.

Ol' Miss Guinea Hen was almost the busiest of the whole company, for she was laying eggs. As soon as ever she laid one she would get up on a low branch and screech, "Catch it! Catch it! Catch it!" like to deafen everybody.

But Li'l' Hannibal was most interested to see what Br'er Rabbit was doing. Br'er Rabbit had on a li'l' apron, and he kept bringing things in his market basket. Then he cooked the things over a fire back in the bushes, and when it got to be late in the afternoon, he spread a tablecloth on a big stump and then he pounded on his stewpan with his soup ladle. "Supper's ready," said Br'er Rabbit.

Then Br'er Robin, and Br'er Partridge, and Br'er Jay Bird, and Br'er Possum, and Ol' Miss Guinea Hen all scrambled to their places at the table and Li'l' Hannibal tried to find a place to sit at, but there wasn't any.

"Po' Li'l' Hannibal!" said Br'er Rabbit as he poured the soup. "Doesn't like work!

Doesn't like to tote for his gran'mammy. Can't have no supper!"

"Catch him! Catch him!" said Ol' Miss Guinea Hen, but no one did it. They were all too busy eating.

They had a grand supper. There was breakfast strip, and roast turkey, and fried chicken, and mutton and rice, and hominy and sweet potatoes, and peas and beans, and baked apples, and cabbage, and hoe cake, and hot biscuits, and corn muffins, and butter cakes and waffles and maple syrup.

When they were through eating, it was dark, and they all went home, and they left Li'l' Hannibal all by himself.

Well, after a while it began to get darker. Br'er Mocking Bird came out, and he looked at Li'l' Hannibal and then he began to scream, just like Ol' Miss Guinea Hen,

"Catch him! Catch him! Catch him!"

Br'er Screech Owl looked down from a tree and he said very hoarsely:

"Who! Who! Who-oo!"

Then all the frogs began to say, loud and

shrill, "Li'l' Hannibal! Li'l' Hannibal!" like they thought he was deaf.

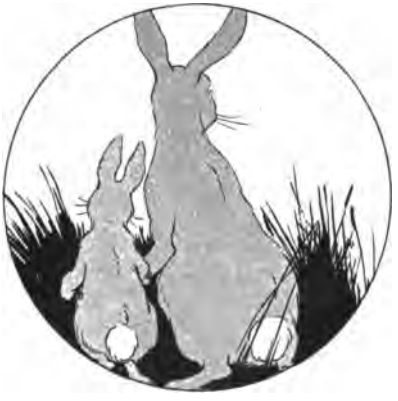
So Li'l' Hannibal got up from his pine stump and he said, "I reckon I better go home to my gran'mammy."

Well, Li'l' Hannibal started for home slowly, because his feet hurt and he was hungry. When he came to the pine grove by the schoolhouse the shadows came out from behind the trees and followed him, and that was much worse than seeing the schoolmistress. But Li'l' Hannibal got away from them all right. He crawled under the fence and ran across the cotton field, and there in the door of the cabin was his gran'daddy with a lantern. His gran'daddy had been out looking for Li'l' Hannibal.

"Why, Li'l' Hannibal, where you been all day?" asked his gran'daddy.

"Oh, Li'l' Han'," said his gran'mammy, "here's your corn mush. I kep' it warm on the hearth, but afore you eat your supper, Li'l' Han, jus' take your li'l' basket and run 'round to the chicken house for a couple of eggs."

So Li'l' Hannibal took his li'l' basket, and he started for those eggs singing all the way. You see, he reckoned he was mighty glad to be at home, and toting again.



HOW TIMOTHY WON THE PRINCESS

ONCE upon a time a poor widow and her son Timothy lived in a little cottage near a village. One day Tim's mother said: "Tim, my boy, the landlord's rent must be paid and I haven't a bit of money in the house. I've made up my mind to sell one of our three cows."

Tim replied: "All right! I'll take the old red cow to the fair in the morning, and sell her for a good price, mother mine."

Bright and early Tim was ready. It was a fine spring morning, and the birds sang merrily in the trees. The hedgerows were white with May blossoms. Tim drove the old cow along the mossy green lanes until he

came to the village, where a fair was being held.

A great crowd had gathered in a ring near the main road, and Timothy hurried there to see what caused the excitement. In the middle of this ring, on a tiny platform, was a little man with a tiny harp and a tiny stool. The dwarf reached down deep into his pocket and brought out a bee, all dressed up in a blue suit of clothes with bright buttons and gold braid. Perched on one side of his head was a cunning little cap which matched his suit. Again the little man reached down into his pocket and drew out a cockroach and a tiny mouse.

The cockroach was dressed in a very full skirt of flowered silk, a lace bodice, and bright panniers of velvet. On her head was a dainty bit of a hat wreathed with flowers.

The little mouse wore a dress suit and a tall silk hat. At a sign from the little man, the bee jumped on the stool and began to play a tune on the harp. Then Mr. Mouse bowed to Miss Cockroach. She courtesied gracefully, and the two began to waltz to the music.

Now the moment they began to dance every man and woman, youth and maid, joined them. Soon everything in sight, pots and pans, pigs and cows, ducks and hens, began to reel about as if they had all gone mad! The old cow began to whirl round and round, and then Timothy started. His feet kept time to the music which grew louder and faster as the sport proceeded. In a short time the little man picked up the harp, stool, and animals and put them back into his pocket.

Instantly, everybody and everything came to a standstill! Then such a roar of laughter burst forth as was never heard before. The people laughed until their sides ached, and Timothy's voice was heard above all the others. The little man walked up to him.

"What do you think of that for sport?" he asked.

"Oh, indeed, it was fine fun, sir," answered Tim.

"And how would you like to own my little animals?"

"Like to own them, sir? Indeed I should,

MAGINEL WRIGHT ENRIGHT

but I have no money, nor have I any way of getting it."

"I'll tell you how to make a good bargain though," said the little man, coming closer. "I'll trade you the harp and my musician, the bee, for the cow you've brought to the fair to sell. Come, what do you say to that?"

"Oh, how I should like to have them, sir! But mother must have money for the landlord. She is very sad and downhearted because we cannot pay the rent."

"Yes, yes, but think how the tiny musician will make her laugh, my boy. She needs cheering," persuaded the little man.

"So she does, sir," said Tim. "I'll trade with you."

The little man took the cow and disappeared, and Timothy put the harp, the stool, and the bee into his pocket and went home.

"You've sold the cow, my boy?" said his mother, anxiously. "How much money did you get for her?"

"Money, mother! I got something much better than money," said Tim, excitedly.

Then out of his pocket he took the harp, the stool, and the bee, and set them on the floor. After a deep bow the bee seated himself on the stool, cocked his head on one side, and began to play a lively tune. The little fellow looked so comical that Timothy's mother couldn't keep a straight face. She burst into a peal of laughter. The lad joined her, and then the pots and the pans, the table and chairs, everything in the house began to reel and jig. Tim and his mother began to hop up and down in the funniest manner. This kept on for some time, and then Tim took up the harp, the stool, and the bee, and put them into his pocket. In a second, everything quieted down. Tim's mother, however, kept on laughing for some minutes. Finally she stopped, and then she grew very angry.

"What a foolish bargain you've made!" she cried. "Here we are without food or money, and you have traded the red cow for such worthless toys! Oh, what shall I do? You must go back to the fair and sell the

white cow, I suppose. See that you keep your wits about you this time."

Early next morning Timothy started to the fair, driving the white cow. They soon arrived, and there in the main road he saw a big crowd gathered. He pushed forward to see what was going on. In the middle of the ring stood the little man with twinkling eyes. His mouth was screwed up in a very queer way, and he was whistling. The mouse and the cockroach were dancing an Irish jig; bowing, reeling, scraping, courtesying in the finest manner. Tim's heart beat fast at the sight. Soon everybody and everything in the fair began to imitate the movements of the queer little creatures. Men and women, youths and maidens, pots and pans, carts and gigs, all hopped about and jigged exactly like the mouse and the cockroach; even the stalls and the buildings seemed to hop up and down in time with the music. In a little while the tiny man stopped whistling, picked up the little animals, and put them into his pocket. Then there was no more dancing, but every-

body burst into a hearty roar of laughter. How they did laugh! The little man now spied Tim.

"Ah, my lad," he said, "wouldn't you like to own those wonderful little creatures?"

"Indeed I should, sir, but I have no money," said Tim, shaking his head.

"Oh! that makes no difference, I'll trade with you again. Give me the old white cow, and I'll give you the mouse."

"Indeed I can't, sir. Mother is so sad because we can't pay our rent or buy any food. I must get money to pay the landlord," replied Tim, looking longingly at the little man's pocket.

"Oh, stuff and nonsense! Better be light-hearted than rich! What will cheer her like the sight of my little gentleman mouse dancing to the music of your musician, the bee?"

"All right, sir," answered Tim, meekly, and he traded the white cow for the mouse.

When he reached home, his mother cried out, "You've sold the cow, my boy?"

"Yes, mother."

"How much money did you get?"

Timothy said not one word, but took the mouse, the harp, and the bee out of his pocket and put them on the floor. Tim began to whistle. The bee accompanied him with beautiful chords on the harp. After a grand sweeping bow the mouse fell into a gay Irish jig. Soon everything in the house seemed to be hopping and jigging about. Even Tim and his mother could not hold their feet still. In a little while Tim took up the mouse, the bee, and the harp and put them into his pocket. Then everything quieted down except the peals of laughter which his mother could not stop. She laughed and laughed until her sides ached. After some time she began to look serious; then she grew very, very angry.

"Tim, you are the most foolish boy in the whole world," she began. "How could you take such worthless toys for our fine old white cow? Oh, dear. What shall I do? There is no money, and the landlord will turn us out. The old spotted cow must go, I see.

Take her to the fair to-morrow and see you bring back *nothing* but money."

"I'll do that mother," said Tim. His intentions were good, but alas! when he reached the fair, there was the little man again with the cockroach. He was whistling merrily and the whole fair went jigging and dancing about, all led by the lively cockroach. Soon the little man put the tiny, graceful dancer into his pocket. Then, as before, the dancing stopped. But the laughter! You should have heard the merry peals in every direction.

"Ha, my boy! Here again! You've brought me the spotted cow, I see! Good! You ought to have the cockroach to complete your wonders. Take her along."

"But, sir, I promised mother," began Tim, "that —"

"See her pretty bright dress. Master Mouse and she make a charming couple. How your mother will be cheered when she sees them dancing together. There is no sight like it. Here you are." Carefully he

lifted the cockroach, and Tim could not resist the offer of such a wonderful little creature. He put her into his pocket, and the little man disappeared with the spotted cow.

Tim hurried home. He slipped into the house. He took out of his pocket Miss Cockroach, Master Mouse, Musician Bee, the harp, and the stool, and arranged them in a corner of the room, telling them to remain quiet until he came back. Then he went into the kitchen.

"Tim, my boy," cried the mother, "how much money did you get?"

"Mother," replied Tim, "don't talk about money. Come with me."

He led her into the next room. The minute they entered, Tim began to whistle. The bee joined him with a lively tune on the harp; the mouse made a deep bow, hat in hand, and the cockroach courtesied most gracefully. Then the two danced toward each other and began a real Irish jig, keeping excellent time to the music. Everything in the

house joined in the merriment, pots and pans, chairs and tables, forks and spoons, all went hopping and jigging about in the most comical way. Tim clapped his hands. His mother nodded her head in time with the music and a broad smile spread over her face, although she tried and tried to frown. Finally Tim took up the tiny dancers, the musician, and the harp, and put them into his pocket. In an instant everything quieted down. Then how Tim's mother did laugh! She laughed until the tears streamed down her cheeks. After some time she quieted herself; then she frowned and grew very angry.

"Oh! you foolish, foolish boy," she began; "you've traded away all my cows for those worthless things. Where shall I get money to pay the rent? We are much worse off than before. Oh, dear! Oh, dear!"

Tim couldn't bear to hear her cry, and so he took his hat and hastened out of doors. He was strolling down the lane toward the distant hills when suddenly he saw a tiny woman who held up her finger in a very

mysterious way. Tim politely raised his hat and bowed.

"Good morning!" she said pleasantly. "I thought all gallant youths were at the palace of the king."

"And why should they be there?" asked Tim astonished.

"Oh, haven't you heard that the king is in great trouble about his beautiful daughter, the princess? She is so sad and downhearted that the court physicians fear she will die. She hasn't laughed for years, and the king has sent word throughout the land that he will give the princess in marriage to any youth who can make her laugh three times."

Tim didn't wait to hear another word. He darted away and ran as fast as he could to the palace. After a time he reached the outer gates, and told the guards who were stationed there why he had come.

"You had better think twice before you try," said one of them, "for the king casts all who fail into a dungeon."

"No matter, I shall try," said Timothy.

Word was sent to the king that a new suitor had arrived at the palace. The king commanded the newcomer to appear immediately.

"You know the penalty if you fail to make the princess laugh three times?" said his majesty.

"I do, most gracious sire," replied Tim, bowing very humbly.

"Then, in a short time, be ready to make your trial." With a gesture the king dismissed him.

In a few minutes a messenger brought word that the king, the queen, the sad princess, and attendants were ready for the trial. Tim took out of his pocket the mouse, the cockroach, the bee, the harp, and the stool. He tied them all together with a long string. Then he marched into the king's room, holding the end of the string in his hand. All the queer menagerie followed after him. He looked so comical as he approached that the king, the queen, and the courtiers burst into a hearty laugh. This made the princess lift her bowed head and look. When her eyes fell

on Tim and his string of queer little followers, she threw back her head and laughed heartily.

"That's once," nodded Tim.

Then he untied the string. Musician Bee at once took his place on the stool near the harp. Mr. Mouse made his deepest bow. Miss Cockroach courtesied deep and long. Tim began to whistle. The bee tuned the harp and joined him with silvery chords. The mouse and the cockroach stepped gracefully in time to the music until they came near each other. Then they began to perform their merry Irish jig. The sight was too much for the king and queen and courtiers. They all burst into such a merry laugh that the castle walls rang. The princess tried to look serious but she couldn't! She joined the others and they all laughed heartily.

"That's twice," said Tim smiling.

Then he began to whistle faster; the bee followed him in time. The mouse and the cockroach bowed and jigged and reeled and whirled,—all to no purpose. The king, queen, and courtiers laughed heartily, but the princess

kept a grave expression. Finally the mouse whirled around on one heel three times, and on the last turn his tail swept right into the cockroach's mouth. The cockroach started to cough violently. She coughed and coughed, and took out her tiny bit of a handkerchief to hold to her mouth. When the princess and her ladies saw this, they threw back their heads and shrieked with laughter.

"That's thrice," said Timothy. "I've won the Princess."

The king now ordered the courtiers to take Timothy to a royal dressing room. There he was dressed in a satin suit with gold lace trimmings and beautiful ornaments. He looked so handsome in his new clothes that the Princess fell in love with him. A glorious wedding feast was prepared. Timothy's mother came in a wonderful coach drawn by six beautiful white horses. At the wedding, the bee furnished the music; the mouse and the cockroach led the dancing; and such was the merriment that the peals of laughter are still ringing in the valley around the palace.

THE OVERTURNED CART.

ONE day, as Oh-I-Am, the wizard, went over Three-Tree Common, his shoe became untied, and he bent down to refasten it. Then he saw Wry-Face, the gnome, hiding among the bracken and looking as mischievous as anything. In one hand he held a white fluff-feather. Now these feathers are as light as anything, and will blow in the wind; and whatever they are placed under, whether light or heavy, they are bound to topple over as soon as the wind blows.

As Oh-I-Am tied his shoe he saw Wry-Face place his fluff-feather carefully in the roadway, and at the same moment there came along One-Eye, the potato wife, with her cart full of potatoes. The cart went rumble,

crumble, crack, crack, crack, over the leaves and twigs, and One-Eye sang to her donkey :

"Steady, steady,
We're always ready,—"

in a most cheerful voice.

Then the cart came to the fluff-feather, and over it went — crash, bang, splutter ; and the potatoes flew everywhere, like rain.

Wry-Face, the gnome, laughed to himself so that he ached, and he rolled over the ground with mirth. Then he flew away, laughing as he went.

But One-Eye, the potato wife, was not laughing. Her tears went drip-drip as she started to gather her potatoes together. And as to getting her cart straight again, she did not know how she was to do it.

But, when she turned round from gathering together the potatoes, she found that the cart was all right again, since Oh-I-Am the wizard had straightened it for her, and the donkey was standing on his legs, none the worse for his fall.

Oh-I-Am looked stern and straight in his brown robe which trailed behind him. He said,

"One-Eye, have you got all your potatoes together?"

One-Eye still wept. She said, "No, I have not found all of them, for some have wandered far. And I must not seek further, for this is market day, and I must away to the town."

And she began to gather up the potatoes, and drop them into the cart, thud, thud, thud.

Oh-I-Am stooped then, and he, too, gathered up the potatoes; and he threw them into the cart, splish, splash, splutter!

"Alas!" said One-Eye, "if you throw them into the cart, splish, splash, splutter, you will bruise and break them. You must throw them in gently, thud, thud, thud."

So Oh-I-Am held back his anger, and he threw the potatoes in gently, thud, thud, thud. But, when the potato wife had gone on her way, he flew to his Brown House by the Brown Bramble; and he began to weave a spell.

He put into it a potato, and a grain of earth, and a down from a pillow, and a pearl and an

apple pip from a pie. And when the spell was ready, he lay down, and fell asleep.

Wry-Face had gone round to all the neighbors to tell them the grand joke about One-Eye, the potato wife. Sometimes he told it through the window, and sometimes he stood at the door. Sometimes he told it to a gnome who was fine and feathery, and sometimes to one who was making bread. But all the time he laughed, laughed, laughed, till he was scarcely fit to stand.

Now he did not call at Oh-I-Am's fine house to tell *him*, not he! And it was quite unnecessary, since Oh-I-Am knew the joke already, every bit.

Oh-I-Am had hidden the spell in his cupboard. When it was evening time, he stole out and laid it by Wry-Face's door. Then he went home, and went to bed.

Wry-Face was making a pie for his supper. Suddenly the room became as dark as dark. The darkness was not night coming on, for this was summer time and night never came on as quickly as all that.

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"Dear me, what can be the matter?" thought Wry-Face; for he could barely see to finish making his pie.

Then he heard a little voice from his window, crying, "Here I am, Wry-Face, here I am!" But he could not go out to see what it was yet awhile.

When the apple pie was finished and in the oven, Wry-Face ran outside as fast as he could. But he did not see the spell which Oh-I-Am had placed by his door.

What he did see was a great potato plant which had sprung up suddenly close to his window, and was springing up further still, high, high, and higher.

"Good gracious me!" cried Wry-Face in a rage, "I never planted a potato plant there, not in my whole life! Now I should just like to know what you are doing by my window?"

The potato plant took no notice, but went on climbing high, high, and higher, and, ever so far above, he heard a tiny faint voice crying,

"Here I am, Wry-Face, here I am!"

"Well, I never did!" cried Wry-Face, and

he began to weep; for he saw that the potato plant would climb up to his roof and round his chimney and he would never be able to get rid of it.

And he wept and wept.

At last he went in, and took his pie out of the oven, and set it in the pantry, for it was quite done. And he found a spade, and went out, and began to dig and dig at the root of the potato plant. But his digging did not seem to make any difference, and the evening began to grow darker.

Wry-Face fetched his little lamp, which is named Bright Beauty and which always burns without flickering. Then he went on digging, and he dug and dug and dug.

And when he had dug for hours and hours, so that he was very, very tired, the potato plant began suddenly to dwindle and dwindle. It dwindled as fast as anything, the leaves disappeared and the stem disappeared and all the horrid stretching arms. They sank down, down, and down, till at last there was nothing left at all but — a big brown potato!

"Well, I do declare!" cried Wry-Face. "I should like to know what *you* have to do with my fine garden."

The potato replied, "I jumped here from the cart of One-Eye, the potato wife, and it is quite certain that unless I am taken back to her immediately, I shall start again, growing and growing and growing."

"Dear potato, you must not start growing again," cried Wry-Face, in a great way. "To-night I am so tired, I cannot do anything, but if you will but wait till to-morrow I will take you back to One-Eye, the potato wife — I will, indeed."

At first the potato would not listen to this at all; but after a while it said, "Well, well, I will wait till to-morrow. But remember, if you do not carry me home to One-Eye, the potato wife, to-morrow, I shall grow into a potato *tree*, without a doubt."

So Wry-Face carried the potato into his house, and stored it in his bin. But he never noticed the spell which Oh-I-Am had placed by his door.

"I am so tired, I can scarcely yawn," said Wry-Face. "It is quite time for me to have my supper and go to bed."

So he fetched the apple pie from the pantry and set it upon the table, and presently he sat down to his meal.

And he forgot for a moment how tired he was, thinking how delightful it was to sit down to a supper of apple pie.

Then he lifted his knife and fork to cut off a large piece, but alas, the fork stuck fast. As for the knife, it would not move either, not an inch. Wry-Face began to weep.

"Alack, what has happened to my apple pie?" cried he, and his tears fell, round as round.

Then he got upon his feet, and he caught hold of the knife and fork and pulled and pulled and pulled. And with the last pull the top of the apple pie came off, sticking to the knife and fork, and Wry-Face saw that within the pie there was not one piece of apple, but — a big brown potato!

Wry-Face wept again with horror at the sight.

"I should like to know," cried he, "what *you* are doing in my fine apple pie?"

The brown potato replied, as cool as cool, "I am one of the potatoes belonging to One-Eye, the potato wife, and I turned the apples out, that I might hide here awhile. But this I must tell you, Wry-Face, unless you take me home to the potato wife immediately, here, in this pie dish, I intend to remain."

"Alas!" cried Wry-Face, "to-night I am so tired I could never find One-Eye; but if you will but wait till to-morrow, I will carry you home to the potato wife — I will, indeed."

At first the potato would not agree to this at all, but after a while it said, "Very well, I will wait till to-morrow. But remember, my Wry-Face, if you do not carry me home to One-Eye to-morrow, I will creep into every pie you make; and you will die at last of starvation without a doubt."

So Wry-Face stored the potato in the potato bin and went supperless to bed. And he knew nothing of the spell which Oh-I-Am had placed by his door.

Now he got into bed, and thought he would go to sleep; but oh, how hard the mattress was! Wry-Face lay this way, then that, but no matter which way he lay, he found a great hump just beneath him which was as hard as hard, and as nobbly as could be.

Wry-Face tossed and tossed till it was nearly morning; and his bones were so sore that he could lie no longer.

Then he pulled the mattress from the bed and cut a great hole in it, and when he had searched and searched he found in the middle of the mattress — a big brown potato!

"This," cried Wry-Face, "is why I have not slept the whole night through!" And he wept like anything.

But the potato was as cool as cool.

"I belong," it said, "to One-Eye, the potato wife; and let me tell you, my little gnome, unless you take me to her immediately, I shall climb into your mattress again, and there I shall remain."

"Alas," cried Wry-Face, "I have tossed about for hours and hours and am too tired

to do anything. But if you will wait till to-morrow, dear potato, I will carry you to One-Eye, the potato wife — I will, indeed."

At first the potato was unwilling to listen to this, but after a while it said, "Very well, then, I will wait till the morning. But this much I know, my Wry-Face, if you do not carry me then to One-Eye, the potato wife, I shall get into your mattress and you shall roll again *every night*."

So Wry-Face put the potato in the bin. When he had done that he went to bed, and slept and slept.

When the sun was shining he awoke, and he remembered that he had to carry the potatoes back to One-Eye, the potato wife; and he was as cross as anything.

"Well, I suppose I must," he said. And when he had had his breakfast, he went to his cupboard to get a sack.

Then he found that his sack was full of pearls which he had gathered together for Heigh-Heavy, the giant, whose daughter, So-Small, he wished to marry.

So he thought, "First of all I will carry the pearls to Heigh-Heavy, for that is more important." And away he went with the sack upon his back. And he never saw the spell which Oh-I-Am had placed beside his door.

When he reached the Most Enormous House of Heigh-Heavy, the Giant, there the giant was sitting in his parlor lacing his shoes.

So Wry-Face cried out in a gay little voice, "Here I am, Heigh-Heavy, here I am. And here is a bag of pearls which I have brought you in exchange for your beautiful daughter, So-Small."

When Heigh-Heavy heard this, he stopped lacing his shoes, and said, "You must bring me in exchange for my daughter So-Small as many pearls as will cover my palm."

Then Wry-Face ran forward and he tipped up the sack; and, standing high upon his toes, he shook out all that it held into the hand of Heigh-Heavy, the Giant.

Now all that it held was — one brown potato!

Wry-Face the gnome stared and stared and

stared, his eyes growing rounder and rounder; but he had no time to weep, on account of Heigh-Heavy the giant who had fallen into a rage terrible to see.

"Now there is one thing quite certain," said Heigh-Heavy, "and that is that you shall never marry my daughter So-Small, for, my Wry-Face, I will turn you into a brown potato, and a brown potato you shall remain your whole life through."

When Wry-Face heard this terrible threat he took to his heels, and ran from the Most Enormous House of Heigh-Heavy, the giant. He ran, and ran, till his coat was torn and his ears were red; and he never rested till he reached his cottage door, and got inside.

Heigh-Heavy laughed till he cried to see the little gnome run. "He will play no tricks on *me!*" said he. And he went in and shut the door.

But Wry-Face said to himself, as he carried the potatoes, weeping, to the potato-wife:

"I will never play a trick on *anyone* again, not as long as I live!"

CHANTICLEER

ONCE upon a time a widow and her two daughters lived in a little cottage near a grove. They were so poor that it took the most careful managing to earn a humble living. Their meals were very simple; indeed, they often had nothing but milk and brown bread, and once in a while a bit of bacon and an egg or two.

Around the cottage was a henyard, fenced in with sticks and a dry ditch, and here the old widow kept a handsome rooster called Chanticleer. His match for crowing could not be found; his voice was merrier than the merry organ heard in the church on Mass days, and the wonder of it was one could tell the hour of the day by his crowing! His comb

was redder than fine coral, and all notched like a castle wall. His bill was black and shone like jet, his legs and his toes were like azure, his nails whiter than the lily flower, and his feathers the color of burnished gold.

Chanticleer lived a happy life. He had with him seven plump wives, all very much like him in color, but by far the cheeriest companion among them was Demoiselle Partlet, who was not only beautiful but also wise and courteous. Chanticleer loved her dearly. What joy it was to hear them sing together at sunrise,

"My love is far away."

Early one morning when Chanticleer and his seven hens sat on the perch, Partlet, who was beside her lord, heard a loud groan. "My dear," she said, astonished and alarmed, "what can be the matter with you? For shame, to wake us all up in this way!"

"Madam," replied the rooster, "do not be anxious about me. It was only a dream, but it has frightened me almost beyond words. I thought I was roaming up and down the yard,

when suddenly I saw a beast somewhat like a hound ready to spring at me. He was between yellow and red in color, his tail and ears were tipped with black, his nose was small and his eyes glowed like fire. I almost died of fright! That is what made me groan."

"Fie for shame!" retorted Partlet. "Do you admit to your love that anything could fill your heart with fear? Alas! Alas! You know that dreams mean nothing. Let me explain what causes them. Overeating creates too much black humor, and in consequence one is likely to dream that black bears, or black bulls, or even *devils* will catch him. Then again, if one has too much red humor he may dream of arrows, of fire with red blazes, or of great and small whelps that will bite. I could go on, but further talk is unnecessary. Dearest, when we fly down from these rafters I will point out to you herbs and berries that will cure you; also for a day or two you shall have a light diet of worms. Cheer up, I say, and in a little while all will be well. Should this occur again, remember

the words of the wise Cato: 'Take no heed of dreams!'"

"Thank you for your excellent advice, my dear," replied Chanticleer. "I know that Cato had much wisdom, but I can give you examples of other very wise men who did not agree with him. Do you not remember the story of Daniel in the Old Testament? Did he think dreams mean nothing? Also read the story of Joseph and you will see that a dream held warnings of future things. Recall for a moment Pharaoh, King of Egypt, his baker and his butler! See what they thought about the meaning of dreams. Wonderful stories on this subject I could point out to you, so do not be surprised that this dream of mine makes me anxious. But now, my dearest Partlet, let us talk about merrier things, for, when I see the beauty of your face and the lovely scarlet hue about your eyes, all my fears leave me. I am so full of joy and comfort in your company that I forget dreams."

Daybreak had come and the rooster and his seven wives flew down from the perch.

"Cluck! Cluck!" he called gayly when he found a tidbit in the yard. Behold Chanticleer in all his glory! Brave as a lion, he roamed proudly on his tiptoes up and down the henyard, never dreaming that an enemy was watching him with cunning interest.

Now it happened that a wicked fox had lived for three years in the grove near the cottage. All this time he had been watching his chance to fall upon the handsome rooster. During the night of Chanticleer's dream, the fox had pushed slyly through the hedge into the garden and had carefully hidden himself among the vegetables.

The sun was shining gloriously! Partlet and her sisters were bathing merrily in the warm sand! Gallant Chanticleer, singing merrier than a mermaid, was watching a butterfly flitting about in the sunshine among the herbs when suddenly his eye caught sight of the fox lying low among the leaves! Terror seized him. The song died in his throat. "Cok! Cok!" he gasped. In a moment he would have fled, but the fox began right

away to speak to him in a very persuasive tone.

"Gentle sir, I hope you are not afraid of me, your own good friend. Certainly I should be worse than a fiend if I harmed you. Indeed I did not come here to spy upon you, but, pardon me, to hear your glorious voice. No angel in heaven could sing sweeter than you do. How well I remember my lord, your father, and my lady, your honorable mother. They have been guests at my house many times. Shall I ever again hear a voice as beautiful as your father's when he greeted the sunrise! I remember exactly how he looked. He stood on his tiptoes, shut his eyes tightly, stretched out his long slender neck and then poured forth his glorious song. He was indeed a wonder. Also, he was very wise and careful. I have heard it said that no one could surpass him in song or wisdom. I wonder, kind sir, if your voice is as beautiful as your father's. For sweet charity's sake, will you not sing one song for me and let me compare the two voices?"

How could Chanticleer refuse one so kind and courteous? He began to flap his wings. He stood on tiptoe. He closed his eyes. He stretched his long, slender neck and began to crow. Snap! In a twinkling the fox seized Chanticleer by the throat, swung him across his back, and was off to the woods with him.

Never was there such a commotion! The hens screamed and cried pitifully. Partlet shrieked at the top of her voice. This brought the widow and her daughters to the door, and then they saw the wicked fox with Chanticleer across his back making for the wood. "Help! Help! A fox! A fox!" they cried, and started after him as fast as they could go. Men snatched up sticks and joined them. The dog Coll ran yelping and barking. Malkin started with the distaff in her hand. The cow and the calf ran. The hogs, frightened at the loud barking of the dogs and the screaming of the people, set up a squealing like fiends and followed in the chase. The ducks quacked as if they were being murdered,

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the geese in terror took flight over the tree tops. The hideous deafening noise started a swarm of bees forth from their hive. Soon other people followed with horns of brass, wood, and bone. They blew, they bellowed, they cried, they screamed, they whooped, they shrieked, and made such a bedlam that it seemed the very heavens would fall. And on ran the fox with the rooster on his back.

Now Chanticleer in all his breathless terror was rapidly turning over in his mind how he could help his friends to rescue him. Controlling his fright as best he could, he said,

"Sir, if I were you, I'd scoff at these followers. Say to them, 'Turn back you proud churls! A plague upon you! The rooster is mine and I'll soon be where I can eat him.'"

"In faith," replied the fox, "I'll do what you say." As soon as the fox opened his mouth, Chanticleer flew high up into a tree which stood near. Now the fox saw his mistake, but was not ready to give up.

"Alas, alas, Chanticleer," he began, "I've

done you a great wrong. I seized you and carried you entirely too roughly. Forgive me for frightening you. Come now, fly down a moment and let me explain."

"No thank you," crowed Chanticleer. "Your flattery will not catch me a second time, and make me sing again with my eyes closed. For no good can come to anyone who closes his eyes when they should be open."

"Bad luck to the one who talks when he should hold his peace," grumbled the fox.

THE JACKAL AND THE ALLIGATOR

A LITTLE Jackal, who was very fond of crabs and bits of fish and whatever else he could find, went down to the riverside one morning in search of something for his dinner. He ran up and down the bank, here and there, but he could find nothing to eat. At last, near some tall bulrushes and under clear, shallow water he saw a little crab who was sidling along as fast as his legs could carry him. The little jackal was so very hungry that, without looking, he put his paw into the water after the crab. "Snap!" A great big alligator who lived in the river, had the paw in his jaws.

"Oh, dear," thought the little jackal, "a

big alligator has my paw in his mouth. In another minute he will drag me down under the water and swallow me. What can I do?" Then a thought came to the little jackal, "I'll fool that old alligator and get away from him." So he called out in a very cheerful voice, "Clever Alligator! Clever Alligator! To catch hold of that bulrush root for my paw! I hope you will find it very tender."

The old alligator was so hidden among the bulrushes that he could scarcely see anything. On hearing the little jackal call out he said to himself, "Dear me, I thought I had caught hold of the jackal's paw; but there he is calling out in a cheerful voice. I suppose I have made a mistake." So saying he opened his mouth and let the little jackal go.

The jackal ran away as fast as he could. When he was at a safe distance he called out, "O wise Alligator! O wise Alligator! So you let me go again." The alligator was very angry, but the little jackal had run too far away to be caught.

The next day the jackal returned to the riverside to get his dinner as before. The old alligator was nowhere to be seen, but the little jackal thought it best not to take any chances, so he called out, "Wherever I go to look for my dinner, I search for the nice little fat crabs that come peeping up through the mud. Then I put my paw down and catch them. I wish I could see one now."

The old alligator was down in the mud at the bottom of the river, and he heard every word the jackal said. He thought to himself, "Aha! I'll just show the tip of my nose up through the mud. He'll take it for a little fat crab and put his paw in to catch me. As soon as he does so, I'll gobble him up!" So he popped the little point of his nose out of the mud and waited. No sooner did the jackal see the tip of the alligator's nose than he called out, "O Friend Alligator, so there you are. No dinner for me here, thank you." And off he ran and fished for his dinner a long, long way from that place. The old

alligator snapped his jaws again and again. He was very angry at missing his dinner a second time, and he made up his mind not to let the jackal escape again.

The following day, the little jackal went down to the waterside as usual to look for crabs. He was rather afraid to go too near the river's edge, for he felt sure the old enemy was hiding somewhere. So he stayed back at a safe distance and called out,

"Where are all the little crabs gone? There is not one here and I am very hungry. When I don't see them on the shore or peeping up through the mud I see them blowing bubble, bubble, bubble, and all the little bubbles go pop! pop! pop!" The old alligator lying low in the mud heard this and he said to himself, "I can fool that little jackal easy enough *this* time. I'll pretend to be a little crab." Then he began to blow, puff, puff! Bubble, bubble, bubble! And all the great bubbles rushed to the top of the river, and burst there, and the water whirled and whirled round and round just above the place

where the old alligator lay hidden. It didn't take the jackal long to know who was underneath those bubbles, and off he ran, as fast as he could go, calling out,

"Thank you, kind Alligator, thank you, thank you! Indeed it is very kind of you to show me just where you are."

The old alligator was furious at being deceived by the little jackal once more. "Next time I will be very cunning," he said. So, for a long time he waited and waited for the jackal to come to the riverside, but the jackal never returned.

"I shall be caught and eaten by that wicked old alligator some day if I am not careful. I must content myself to do without crabs." He went no more to the river, but stayed in the jungle and ate wild figs and roots which he dug up with his paws.

When the alligator found this out he was angry again, and he determined to try to catch the jackal on land. So he crawled over the ground to a place where the largest of the wild fig trees grew. He made a great heap

of the fallen figs and hid himself under it, and there he waited for the jackal. No sooner did the cunning little animal spy the great pile of figs than he thought, "Oh, ho, that looks much like my friend the alligator. I'll see." So he called out,

"The little wild figs I like best always tumble down from the tree, and roll here and there as the wind drives them. That great heap of figs is quite still. They can not be good figs. I will not eat one of them."

The old alligator thought, "Oh, ho! How suspicious this jackal is. I will make the figs roll about a little, then he will come and eat them."

So the great beast shook himself and all the little figs went roll, roll, roll, this way and that, farther than the most blustering wind could have driven them. The jackal knew who was under the heap. Away he scampered, calling back, "Thank you, Mr. Alligator, for letting me know you are there! I should scarcely have guessed it." The alligator hear-

ing this was so angry that he ran after the jackal, but the jackal ran away too quickly to be caught.

The old alligator was now in a rage. "I will not let him make fun of me another time and then run away out of my reach. I will show him I can be more cunning than he thinks," he declared.

Early the next morning he crawled as fast as he could till he came to the little jackal's den. The jackal was away, and so he crept in and hid himself to wait until the little animal should return. By and by the jackal came home. He looked all about the place, for the ground around his house was torn up as though some very heavy animal had been crawling there.

"Dear me," he said. Then he saw that the earth on each side of the door of his den had been knocked down as if something very big had tried to squeeze through it.

"I certainly will not go inside until I know who has gone in there." So he called out, "Little house, why do you not give me an an-

swer when I call? You always call out to me if all is safe and right. Is anything wrong that you do not speak?"

Then the alligator who was inside thought, "I must pretend to be the little house and call out. He will not come in unless he thinks all is right in here." So he called out in as pleasant a voice as he could, "Sweet little Jackal." When the little jackal heard that he was frightened indeed.

"So that dreadful old alligator is in my house. I must try to kill him if I can, or he will certainly make an end of me some day."

Then he answered, "Thank you, my dear little house. I like to hear your pretty voice. I am coming in a minute, but first I must collect some firewood to cook my dinner." As fast as he could, he gathered all the dry branches and bits of sticks and piled them up close to the mouth of the den. The old alligator inside kept as quiet as a mouse, but he could not help laughing a little to himself, "So I have deceived that little jackal at last.

In a few minutes he will run in here, and then, won't I snap him up!"

When the jackal had gathered as many sticks as he could find, he ran back and placed the sticks all round the outside of his den. Then he set fire to them. The great fire blazed up, and the smoke filled the den and smothered that wicked old alligator.

FINN AND THE FAIRY SHOEMAKER

FINN O'SHEA'S grandmother knew more about fairies than anyone else in the village. One afternoon when the sun was shining on the tops of the Nine Hills, which rose up a few fields beyond the edge of the village, Finn and his grandmother were coming home from a walk. Suddenly the old woman darted forward and picked up the tiniest bit of a gray feather. Her sharp eyes had spied it under the shadow of a foxglove.

"What is it, Granny?" asked Finn.

"An owl's feather, lad. It fell out of one of their wee red caps," said she, laughing quietly. "They had a fine revel in the fields last night, my boy, for it was Midsummer Eve. That is the time when the wee folks are gayest, you know."

"I wish I could see them dancing," said Finn.

"Ah, my lad, no mortal can see them so long as they keep their wee red caps on," said grandmother. "Sometimes in their revels they toss their caps aside, but you see the frogs are always on the lookout to warn the fairies if mortal steps are near. These tiny elves are very clever. Do you see those three circles of green which are a little lighter in color than the rest of the grass? That is where they danced until the village cocks began to crow. Then they made off to the Nine Hills. Ah! It would be a wonderful sight to see the wee folks whirling and gliding about in the white moonlight to the sweetest fairy music. But as I said, few mortals have ever seen them."

"Do they dance every night, grandmother?"

"Every night, Finn. If the weather is fine they frolic on the green, especially if the moon is bright. When the nights are wet and stormy they keep inside the hills, where there is an elfin village."

Finn look very serious. "Grandmother," he said, "these wee folks must wear out a good many pairs of shoes."

"That they do, my lad. I'm sure I don't know what they would do without little Leprechaun, the Fairy Shoemaker. He is the only industrious one among them."

"Tell me about him, Granny," said Finn.

Grandmother sat down on a large stone and looked toward the Nine Hills.

"The Fairy Shoemaker is very rich, Finn, richer than my lord O'Toole who lives in the castle by the sea. Indeed, there is no one in all Ireland who has as much gold as this elfin shoemaker who spends his days working for the fairies. All kinds of shoes he makes, — stout little brogans and buskins, high hunting boots, bits of satin slippers that you could stand on a penny, tiny sandals with silver laces and diamond buckles, — all kinds of shoes. O Finn, my lad, he is a wonderful wee old man."

"Where does he keep his money, Granny?"

"Why, what a question, my lad! Do you

think this sly little Elf would let any mortal know that secret? Not he!"

"I wonder if anyone has ever seen him," said Finn.

"My lad, your great-grandmother O'Shea knew a poor farmer who found a pot of gold buried in one of his fields. The villagers always believed that the man had in some way caught little Leprechaun, and made him point out the spot where his gold was hidden."

"Granny," said Finn, "I'd like to catch the Fairy Shoemaker. One pot of his gold would make us very rich, wouldn't it?"

"Catch little Leprechaun, Finn! My lad, you couldn't do it."

"He is very tiny, grandmother. I'm sure I could hold him easily."

"You would have to catch him, first, Finn. He is the trickiest Elf of all. No one can see him as long as he wears his wee red cap! And if you should chance to find him without it, you wouldn't dare take your eyes off him for one second or away he would go. Some people say bad luck is sure to come to mortals

who meddle with the fairies," said grandmother, looking about cautiously. "It is better to earn your pot of gold, my lad. But come, the sun has gone behind the hills."

Finn was very quiet all the way home. He was wondering how he could catch the Fairy Shoemaker and make the little Elf tell where his treasure crocks were hidden. He would begin the search in good earnest the very next day.

In the morning when Finn drove the cow to the pasture, he peeped carefully among the low willows that bordered the brook. He looked all around the big stones in the meadow. Several times he stopped and listened! Once he felt sure he caught the clicking sound of an elfin hammer. It seemed to come from the direction of a tall ragweed, but when Finn drew near, the sound stopped suddenly and he could see nothing. Patiently each day he searched for the little Leprechaun. One afternoon when he was sauntering through a shady glen near the Nine Hills he stooped down to quench his thirst at

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a tiny spring of clear water. He fancied he heard a faint clicking sound! "Tip-tap, tip-tap." Finn raised his head quickly and listened!

"Rip-rap-tip-tap
Tick-a-tack-too;
Tip-tap-tip,
Rip-rap-rip,
Tick-tack-too."

The sound came from behind a large stone near the spring. Soon the tapping stopped and the shrill voice sang out:

"Tip-a tap-tip
And tick-a-tack-too,
Every stitch helps
To finish a shoe."

Finn could hear his heart beat. He crept cautiously along and peeped around the stone. There, on a tiny stool, sat the Fairy Shoemaker hammering away at a wee hunting boot of scarlet leather, which he held between his knees. *And his bit of a red cap was hanging on a spear of tall grass!* Finn leaped to his

feet, faced little Leprechaun, seized the red cap, and said, "Good day, sir."

Instantly the little Elf jumped up and looked sharply through his spectacles at Finn. He was about twelve inches tall and his queer little face was full of wrinkles. A long gray beard reached to the top of a leathern apron which almost covered his brown suit.

"Good day, sir," repeated Finn.

"Humph!" grunted Leprechaun.

Finn went closer, grasped the little Elf's shoulder, held him tightly, and stared sharply at him.

"You'd better be off," said the Fairy Shoemaker; "I have work to do."

Finn kept his eyes fixed on the wee man, and said, "Come, now, where do you keep your treasure crocks? I shall not let you go until you tell me."

"Oh! Is that all you want?" laughed the Elf. "Well, come along with me."

Finn was delighted. The old man seemed very easy to manage. Leprechaun looked up pleasantly and said, "Your pardon, sir." He

pulled out a tiny gold snuffbox, took a pinch and offered some to Finn. "Snuff, sir?" he said with a smile.

"Why, how friendly he seems," thought Finn, taking a pinch.

"Pouf-f!!" The Fairy Shoemaker blew all the snuff right into Finn's face.

"Tshoo-oo!—Tshoo-oo! A-a-a-tshoo-oo-oo!" sneeezed Finn, *shutting his eyes!* In a twinkling the wee man had snatched his red cap and was gone!

Finn went home a little discouraged. "Why didn't I remember what Granny told me about his tricks?" he said to himself. "I'll try again, and he shall not catch me a second time."

One afternoon a few weeks later, Finn walked as far as the Nine Hills. He was very tired, so he lay down on one of the grassy slopes to rest. How quiet it was on the shady hillside!

"Tip-a-tap-tip
And tick-a-tack-too,
Rip-rap-rip
Tick-tack-too."

The sound came from the crest of the hill. After a little pause a shrill voice sang:

"A wedding feast to-night
And dancing on the green!
In moonbeams' silver light
Gay fairies will be seen!
Tiny satin sandals
To grace the dainty bride;
Stitch away Leprechaun
They must be your pride."

It was the voice of little Leprechaun! The Fairy Shoemaker was working away near the crest of the hill. Finn crept up the grassy slope, and there in the shadow of some low bushes sat the tiny Elf. He was putting a high heel on the daintiest white satin sandal. And beside him lay his wee red cap!

"Tip-tap-rip-rap
Tick-a-tack-too."

The elfin hammer was working busily — busily!

Finn slipped up quietly, and grasping the red cap in one hand laid hold of the wee

man's shoulder with the other. Up jumped the Elf. He looked round quickly for his cap.

"Good day, sir," said Finn.

Leprechaun made a deep bow.

"You are busy, I see."

"Always busy, sir," answered the wee man. "Always busy."

"I suppose you like to make shoes, especially such dainty ones?" And all the time Finn kept his eyes on the little Elf's face and held him fast.

"I like to *work*," said the Fairy Shoemaker slyly. "Come, now, do you?"

Finn felt a little confused at this last question, but he answered,

"You have plenty of gold and some to spare, I should think. Come, tell me where you keep your treasure crocks."

"I will show you where I keep *one* of them," answered Leprechaun.

"All right," answered Finn. "If you'll lead me to the spot where one crock of gold is buried, I'll not bother you again."

"Come, then," said the Elf.

"Mind that you keep your snuffbox in your pocket," said Finn. "You shan't catch me that way again."

"This way," laughed the wee man.

Down the hillside and over the fields hurried the Fairy Shoemaker, leading Finn along at a good pace. It was wonderful to see this queer Elf skip across the ditches and hedges, and hop over the stones and rough places in the meadow. Finn was becoming very tired. "How much farther is it?" he asked.

"Come along, come along," laughed little Leprechaun.

Finally they came to a field full of ragweed. The Fairy Shoemaker stopped suddenly. Then pointing with his tiny finger, he said, "If you dig deep under the roots of this weed, you'll find one of my treasure crocks filled to the brim with gold."

"But I can't dig without a spade," said Finn excitedly.

"Of course not," answered Leprechaun. "But now that you know the spot you can get the gold whenever you like."

"I shall get it to-day," said Finn. "I'll run home now and get my spade. But I'd better mark the weed, I think."

"That would be a good plan," said the Shoemaker. "Here I have a bit of bright red string in my pocket. Let us tie it around the stem near the top."

How deftly the elfin fingers tied the mark!

"Thank you very kindly," said Finn.

"Is there anything else I can do for you, sir?" asked Leprechaun.

"You will promise not to touch the string?"

"I promise not to touch it, sir. Also I assure you no one else shall touch it," said Leprechaun.

"Well, then, you may go. Here is your red cap. I thank you very much for your kindness. Good day!" said Finn pleasantly.

"Good day, sir," said the Fairy Shoemaker, and off he scampered, chuckling to himself.

You may be sure Finn hurried away to fetch his spade. How surprised Granny would be to hear that he had caught the Fairy Shoemaker. He would not tell her until he

carried home the treasure. In breathless haste he got his spade and hurried back to the field of ragweed. Then Finn stood still and looked! A bit of bright red string was tied around every ragweed in the field! The Fairy Shoemaker had tricked him again! He thought he heard a low chuckling laugh. Finn listened carefully. From among the weeds he heard a faint voice singing,

"How does the little Leprechaun
Fill treasure crocks with gold?
The live long day he *works away*
From far-off times of old."

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

"HAT a pretty day this is!" said the old gray goose to the brown hen, as they stood at the henhouse window and watched the falling snow which covered every nook and corner of the farmyard.

"Yes, indeed," said the brown hen; "I would be almost willing to be made into chicken pie on such a day."

She had scarcely stopped talking, when the Pekin duck said, fretfully, "I am dreadfully hungry," and a little flock of speckled chickens all huddled together wailed in sad chorus, "And we're so thirsty!"

In fact, the feathered folks in the henhouse were very much inclined to be cross and dis-

contented. Since the farmer's boy fed them, early in the morning, they had been given nothing to eat or drink, and, as hour after hour went by, and the cold winter wind howled around their house, it is no wonder they felt deserted.

The handsome white rooster, however, appeared quite as happy as usual, and that is saying a great deal, for a jollier, better-natured old fellow than he never graced a farmyard. Sunshine, rain, or snow were all the same to him, and he crowed quite as lustily in stormy weather as in fair.

"Well," he said, laughing heartily, as his bright eyes glanced about the henhouse, "you all seem to be having a fit of the dumps."

Nobody answered the white rooster, but a faint cluck or two came from some hens who immediately put their heads back under their wings, as if ashamed of having spoken at all.

This was quite too much for the white rooster, who, standing first on one yellow foot and then on the other, said: "Well, we are a

lively set! Anyone would think, to look in here, that we were surrounded by a band of hungry foxes."

Just then a daring little white bantam rooster hopped down from his perch, and, strutting pompously over to the big rooster, created quite a stir among the feathered folk by saying,

"We're all lively enough when our crops are full, but when we're starving the wonder is that we can hold our heads up at all. If I ever see that farmer's boy again, I'll — I'll peck his foot!"

"You won't see him until he feeds us," said the white rooster, "and then I think you will peck his corn."

"Oh, oh!" moaned the brown hen, "don't mention a peck of corn."

"Madam," remarked the white rooster, bowing politely, "your trouble is my own — that is, I'm hungry, too. But we might be worse off; we might be on our way to market in a box. Then, too, suppose we haven't had enough to eat to-day, at least we have room

enough to stretch our wings and a good, quiet place to sleep in."

"Why, that is a fact," answered the brown hen; and all the feathered family — the smallest chickens included — stretched their wings, preened their feathers, and looked a trifle more animated.

"Now then," went on the rooster, "suppose we have a little music to cheer us and help pass the hours until roosting time. We will all crow — there, I beg your pardon, ladies; I am sorry you can't crow — we will sing a merry song. Will you be kind enough to start a lively tune, Mrs. Brown Hen?"

The brown hen shook herself proudly, tossed her head back, and began: "Cut-cut-cut-ca-dak-cut," and in less than two minutes every one in the henhouse had joined her.

Now the horses, cows, and sheep were not far away, and, hearing the happy voices in the henhouse, they, too, joined in the grand chorus, while the pigs did their best to sing louder than all the rest. Higher and higher, stronger and stronger, rose the chorus; louder and

louder quacked the ducks, and shriller and shriller squealed the pigs. At length even the dogs barked merrily.

They were all so happy that they quite forgot their hunger until the door of the henhouse burst open, and in came three chubby children, each carrying a dish full of steaming chicken food.

"Don't stop your music, Mr. Rooster," said the little girl, who was so snugly bundled up that you could scarcely see her dear little face. "You see, we were so lonesome that we didn't know what to do; but when we heard all you folks singing out here in your house, we laughed and laughed until we almost cried. Then we went to tell Jack about you; he was lonesome, too — poor Jack sick with a sore throat — and he said, 'Why, those poor hens; they haven't been fed since morning!'"

"Cock-a-doodle-do!" said the white rooster. "This comes of making the best of things. Cock-a-doodle-do!" And nobody asked him to stop his crowing.

THE BROWNIE OF BLEDNOCK

DID you ever hear how a Brownie came to the village of Blednock and was frightened away again?

It was one November evening, just when the milking was done and before the children were put to bed. The people of the village were standing by their doorsteps talking about their bad harvest and the turnips, and what chances there were of a good price for their cattle at the coming fair.

All at once the queerest humming noise seemed to come up from the riverside. It came nearer and nearer, and all the good people stopped talking and began to look down the road. And, indeed, it was no wonder that they stared, for there, coming up the middle

of the highway, was the strangest little creature that human eyes had ever seen.

He looked like a wee, wee man. He had a long blue beard which almost touched the ground. His legs were twisted, his knees knocked together as he walked, and his arms were so long that his hands trailed in the mud as he came along. He seemed to be humming something over and over. As he came nearer, the good people of the village could make out the words:

"Have ye work for Aiken-Drum?
Any work for Aiken-Drum?".

Oh, how frightened the people were! The children screamed and hid their faces in their mothers' gowns and the milkmaids threw down the pails of milk they were carrying. Even the dogs crept in behind the doors, whining and hiding their tails between their legs. Some of the men who were not too frightened to look the wee man in the face, laughed and hooted at him.

"Did you ever see such eyes?" cried one.

"His mouth is so big he could swallow the

moon and never even notice it," said the other.

"Look at his long blue beard!" said a third.

And still the poor little man came slowly up the road, crying:

"Have ye work for Aiken-Drum?
Any work for Aiken-Drum?"

Good Grannie Duncan, the kindest old woman in the village, called out at last: "He's just a Brownie, a simple, kindly Brownie. I've heard tell of Brownies before. Many a long day's work will they do for the people who treat them well."

Gathering courage from her words, all the village folk crowded around the little man. When they were close to him, they saw that his face was kind and gentle and that his tiny eyes had a merry twinkle in them.

"Strange little creature," said an old man, "tell us what you want and where you came from?"

"I cannot well tell thee whence I came," said the wee man. "My country is a nameless land and is very different from this land

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of yours. For there we all learn to serve, while here every one wishes to be served. When there is no work for us to do at home, we sometimes set out to visit thy land to see if there is any work we can do there. If thou wilt, I will stay here awhile. I do not wish anyone to wait on me, for I want no wages, nor clothes, nor bedding. All I ask for is a corner of the barn to sleep in, and a bowl of broth set down on the floor at bedtime. If no one meddles with me, I shall be ready to help any one who needs me. I'll gather your sheep on the hill. I'll take in the harvest by moonlight. I'll sing your bairns to sleep in their cradles. You'll find that the bairns all love Aiken-Drum. And, good housewives, I'll churn for you and bake your bread on a busy day. The men folk, too, may find me useful when there is corn to thrash, or untamed colts in the stables, or when the waters are out in flood."

No one knew quite what to say in answer to the little creature's strange request. It was an unheard-of thing for anyone to come and offer

his services for nothing. Some thought it could not be true; others said it were better to have nothing to do with the little creature.

Then up spoke good Grannie Duncan again:

"He's but a Brownie, I tell you, a harmless Brownie. Many a story I've heard in my young days about the work that a Brownie can do, if he be treated well and let alone. Have we not all been complaining about bad times, small wages, and the hard work we all have to do? And now, when a workman comes ready to your hand, you will have nothing to do with him just because he is strange looking. And I've heard that a Brownie can stalk a whole ten-acre field in a single night! Shame on you, say I!"

"A ten-acre field in a single night!" cried out all the men of the village at once. "A ten-acre field!" repeated one. "And in a single night!" added another. That settled the matter. The miller at once offered the Brownie a corner of his barn to sleep in, and good Grannie Duncan promised to make him some broth at bedtime and to send her grand-

child, wee Janie, down to the barn with it every evening. Then all the people of the village said, "Good night," and went to their homes. But they were careful to look over their shoulders once in a while, for fear that the strange little man was following them.

But if they were afraid of him that night, they had a very different story to tell about him before a week had passed. Whatever he was or wherever he came from, he was the most wonderful little worker that these people had ever known. And the strange thing was that he did most of the work at night. Village folk came from all parts of the countryside to catch a glimpse of this queer little worker, but they were never successful, for he was never to be seen when one looked for him. They might have gone to the miller's barn twenty times a day, and twenty times a day they would have found nothing but a heap of straw and an empty broth bowl.

But whenever there was work to be done, whether it was a tired child to be sung to, or a house to be made tidy, or a batch of bread

to be worked up, or a flock of sheep to be gathered together on a stormy night, Aiken-Drum always knew of it and appeared ready to help just at the right time.

Many a time some poor mother who had been up all night with a crying child would sit down with it on her lap in front of the fire in the morning and fall asleep. When she awoke she would find that Aiken-Drum had made a visit to her house; for the floor would be scrubbed and the dishes washed, the fire made up and the kettle put on to boil. But the little Brownie would have slipped away as if he were afraid of being thanked.

The little children were the only ones who ever saw him when he was not working, and, oh, how they loved him! When school was out you could see them away down by the stream crowding around the little dark brown figure, and you could hear the sound of low, sweet singing; for Aiken-Drum knew all the songs that children love well.

By and by the name of Aiken-Drum came to be a household word among the good people

of the village, for, although they seldom saw him near at hand, they loved him like one of their own people.

And he would never have gone away if every one in the village had remembered what good Grannie Duncan told them about Brownies. "A Brownie works for love," she had said to them over and over again. "He will not work for pay. If anyone tries to pay him, the wee creature's feelings will be hurt, and he will vanish in the night."

But a good man of the village and his wife forgot all that had been said, and one day they planned to make something for Aiken-Drum.

"He should not work for nothing," said the good man.

"He has already worn out his coat and trousers slaving for us," said his wife.

So one day they made him a little pair of green trousers and a little brown coat. That night the two good people laid a parcel by the side of the bowl of broth in the miller's barn.

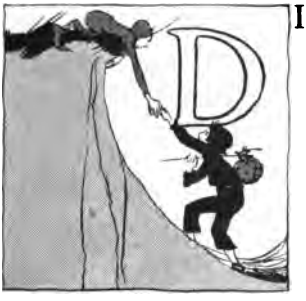
In the middle of the night some one heard

the Brownie saying to himself, "A nice pair of green trousers and a little brown coat for me. I can come here no more till one of the children of this village travels the world over and finds me first."

So this strange little creature had to go away. He vanished in the night as any Brownie is sure to do if some one tries to pay him.

And all the good people of Blednock talked of the kind deeds of the little strange man who came one evening into their midst, and they wondered and wondered if he would ever come back to them again.

HOW OLAF BROUGHT THE BROWNIE BACK



DID you ever hear how Olaf, one of the village children, went in search of the Brownie and brought him back to the good people of Blednock?

It came about in this way.

Olaf's father had often told him of the Brownie that had once lived in the village and had helped all the village people to do their work.

"The little lively thing would come night after night and clean the floor, and scrub the table, and wash the dishes, and keep the whole house as clean as a new pin. But one night he went away and he never came back."

"Why did he go away, father?" asked Olaf.

"Well," said his father, "there's great pride in Brownies. They'll work their fingers off for love, but you must never thank them, nor give them anything, or away they will go. Good Grannie Duncan had told us that over and over again, but your mother and I forgot all about her wise words. We thought that the little thing ought not to work for nothing. So we bought a piece of green cloth and a piece of brown cloth and your mother sat up all night cutting and stitching. By morning she had made as neat a pair of little trousers and as fine a coat as ever she made for you.

"That night we laid the clothes in a little parcel beside the bowl of broth, and we heard the little thing saying to himself:

"'A nice pair of green trousers and a little brown coat for me. I can come here no more — *no more* — till one of the children of the village travels the world over and finds me first.'

"And the strange little creature vanished in the night and no one has seen or heard

of him since though we have missed him very, very much."

Olaf thought about the Brownie all day. He felt that, although the world away from the village might be very dangerous, he was quite willing to travel in it if, by so doing, he could bring the Brownie back to Blednock.

Olaf asked each person in the village where to find the Brownie. Also, he asked the oldest apple tree in the orchard, but it said nothing. He asked the cows, but they said nothing. He asked the dog, but he barked about other things. Only the sheep helped him. They said nothing, but they looked as if they knew. Olaf tended the sheep and the young lambs throughout the year, and he wondered and wondered if the lambs learned from the old sheep where the Brownie was hidden.

"I will not come back until a child of this village travels the world over and finds me first, — travels the world over and finds me first," Olaf kept saying to himself over and over.

At last one summer evening, as he was coming home from the sheepfolds, he heard the faint sound of bagpipes very near. He heard it again the next night, and the next, and the night after that, and every night, until, at last, he made up his mind to follow the sound and find out who it was that played the pipes so sweetly.

He left the sheep path and followed the music, walking carefully lest he should lose it. The soft sweet notes seemed to come from a mass of rocks which lay on the moor behind him. As he came near the rocks he knew the music was directly above it, so he started to climb up. Halfway up the path was easy to climb, and he soon won his way up to a little tree which thrust itself out of the side of the pile. He twisted himself over the tree and rested there, wondering how he could get up the rest of the way, for he saw six feet of smooth rock up to the top.

All the time the music of the bagpipes, scarcely louder than a concert of bees and crickets, sounded close above his head. "Oho,

there!" shouted Olaf at last. The music stopped suddenly. A little brown face with a long blue beard looked eagerly over the top of the rocks.

"So it is you, is it?" said a voice. "Here, take hold of my wrist and then pull."

Olaf caught sight of a long brown arm stretched down toward him. He caught hold of the wrist and pulled, and the next moment Olaf found himself scrambling over a thick mass of heather on to the top of the rocks. He lay sprawling on the edge of a little cleft in the rock with high walls on the sides. In one of these walls there was a little cave, and just in front of the cave was a little three-legged stool that had been upset, and a little set of bagpipes was lying on the ground beside it.

"So here you are!" said the little brown creature as he helped Olaf to his feet. "I've been waiting for you a long time. Look!" He ran into the cave and came out dragging a broom behind him, and holding a stone so polished that even in the dim light Olaf

could see his face in it. And Olaf wondered and wondered.

"Look! I've worn out two hundred and thirty of these brooms, and polished that rough stone smooth — all for want of proper work, since I had to leave the village."

"Are you the Brownie?" asked Olaf, joyfully.

"Yes," was the answer.

"Are you Aiken-Drum?"

"Yes," came the answer again.

"I've been looking for you ever since I can remember. That was why the sheep knew, — because you live on the moor."

"Yes," said the Brownie, "the sheep know me."

"Will you come back to the village, now?" asked Olaf.

"Not yet," said the Brownie. "You and I must travel the world together. Then I'll go back. Your father should have known better than to pay a Brownie. He should have known that we work for love. Here I have been all this time wearing out brooms

on these rocks and polishing a stone, waiting for the village child to find me. And you've come!" said the Brownie, as he danced into the cave. He soon returned carrying a little wooden cage with a big cockroach inside. He opened the cage and took the cockroach on his finger.

"You've found me," he kept saying, "you've found me! Now there's nothing left but the travels. Fly, cockroach," he cried, "fly fast and straight, and tell my brothers that Olaf has come. Tell them to launch the boat. Tell them we are coming — Olaf and I."

He let the cockroach fly from his hand and it boomed away in the still air of the summer night. Olaf heard a kr-r-r-r-r-r in the pine woods. It might, he thought, be the Brownies launching the little boat.

And that is how Olaf found the Brownie and came to make his travels with him. They sailed away — away to Glittering Harbor where great ships lay close together in the golden sunset; they won the marvelous

horse and they found the white flower that can be bought only for love — like the Brownies' services.

By and by their travels were over and Aiken-Drum returned with Olaf to the village of Blednock. And that is why the kitchen floors of these village people are so wonderfully scrubbed and why the pans shine brighter than those in any other kitchens of the country side. And Aiken-Drum has a merry life as he scrubs the pans and washes the dishes, and he is very, very happy to know that he will *never* be paid for it.

THE POOR LITTLE TURKEY GIRL

ALL alone in a very old cottage near the border of a village lived a little girl who herded turkeys for a living. She was very, very poor. Her clothes were patched and tattered. Little was ever given to her except the food she lived on from day to day, and now and then a piece of old worn-out clothing.

But the child had a winning face and bright eyes. She had also a very loving disposition. She was always kind to the turkeys which she drove to and from the plains every day, giving to them the affection she longed for but which she herself never received from anyone. The turkeys loved their little mistress in return. They would come immedi-

ately at her call and they would go willingly anywhere she wished to send them.

One day as the little girl went along, driving her turkeys to the plains, she heard a great commotion in the village. She stopped to see the cause of the excitement and found it to be a herald who was proclaiming from the house top, "The great festival will take place in four days. Come youths and maidens. Come one, come all. Join in the Dance of the Sacred Bird!"

Now this child had never been permitted to join in or even watch this great festivity of the people, and she longed with all her heart to see it.

"My dear turkeys, how I should love to watch this blessed festival, particularly the Dance of the Sacred Bird!" It was her custom to talk matters over with her turkeys, for they were the child's only companions. She told them day after day of the wonderful festival that was to be, and how happy she would feel if she could join in the dance with the others. "But it is impossible, my

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beloved turkeys, ugly and ill-clad as I am," she would say, when she saw the people of the village busy in cleaning their houses and preparing their clothes, laughing and talking as they made ready for the greatest holiday of the year.

The poor child never dreamed that her turkeys understood every word she said to them. But they did, and more.

The fourth day came, and all the people of the village went to join in the festivities. All but one, and that one was the poor little turkey girl who wandered about alone with her beloved flock. Soon she sat down upon a stone to rest, for she was sad at the thought of all the merrymaking while she was alone on the plains.

Suddenly it seemed to the little girl that one of her big gobblers, making a fan of his tail, and skirts of his wings, strutted up to her and, stretching out his neck said, "Little Mother, we know what your thoughts and wishes are and we are truly sorry for you. We wish that you, like all the other people

of the village, might enjoy this holiday. Many times we have said to ourselves at night, after you had safely placed us in our house, that you are as worthy to enjoy these gayeties as anyone in the village. Little Mother, would you like to see this dance and even join in it and be merry with the rest?"

The poor child was at first surprised, then it all seemed so very natural that her turkeys should talk to her as she had always done to them, that she looked up and said, "My dear Gobbler, how glad I am that we may speak together. But tell me what it all means."

"Listen well, then, for I speak the speech of my people. If you will drive us in early this afternoon, when the dance is most gay and the people are happiest, we will help you to make yourself so pretty and so beautifully dressed that no man, woman, or child among all those assembled at the dance will know you. Are you willing to do as we turkeys say?"

"Oh, my dear turkeys, why should you tell me of things that you well know I long

to do but cannot by any possible means in the world ? "

" Trust in us," said the old gobbler. " When we begin to call and gobble and gobble and turn toward home, follow us and we will show you what we can do for you. Only let me tell you one thing. Much happiness and good fortune may come to you through the chance for pleasure which we turkeys are going to give you. But if, through your own great happiness, you forget us, who are your friends and who depend so much upon you, we shall think that our Little Mother, though so humble and poor, deserves her hard life. We shall think that, since good fortune came to her, she does unto others as others now do to her."

" Come, then," said the old gobbler, and the little girl followed him. All the turkeys of their own accord followed the old gobbler and their Little Mother homeward. They knew their places well and ran to them as soon as they could. When they had all gone into their home the old gobbler called out, " Come in." The little girl went in. " Now

sit down and give me and my companions your articles of clothing one by one. You will see what we can do with them."

The little girl took off the ragged old shawl that covered her shoulders and laid it upon the ground in front of the old gobbler. He seized it in his beak and spread it out. Then he picked and picked at it and trod upon it, and, lowering his wings, strutted back and forth, back and forth over the old worn-out garment. Once more he took it in his beak and strutted and puffed and puffed and strutted, until he finally laid it at the feet of the little girl — a beautiful white cloak, all silk-embroidered.

Then another gobbler came forward and took an article of the little girl's clothing which he made over into a beautiful gown of golden cloth. Then another gobbler came, and another and another, until each garment the little girl had worn was new and more beautiful than any owned by the richest woman of the land.

The little girl began to dress herself in the

beautiful clothes, but before she finished her turkeys circled around her, singing and singing and clucking and clucking, and brushing her with their wings until she was clean and her face was as smooth and bright as that of the fairest maiden in the village. Her hair was soft and wavy and her cheeks were full of dimples and her eyes danced with smiles, for now she knew how true were the words of her beloved turkeys. At last one old turkey came forward and said, "You shall have rich jewels, Little Mother; we turkeys have keen eyes and have picked up many valuable things in our wanderings. Wait a moment." He spread out his wings and strutted off, but he soon returned with a beautiful necklace in his beak. "See, this is for you." The little girl could scarcely believe her own eyes. "And this, too," said another turkey, as he came up and laid a pair of earrings in her hand.

With these beautiful things the Little Mother decorated herself and, after thanking her beloved turkeys again and again, she started to go. As she did so all the turkeys seemed to

call out in one voice: "Oh, Little Mother, we love you and we would bring you to good fortune. Leave our door open, for who knows whether you will remember your turkeys when your fortunes are changed. Perhaps you will grow ashamed that you have been our Little Mother. Remember us and do not tarry too long."

"I will surely remember, O my turkeys," and with that she was on her way to the great festival. Hastily she ran down the river path toward the village until she came to a long covered way that led into the great dance court. When she came just inside the court she could see the crowd of villagers making merry in the great dance. She drew nearer as if to join the others, when every eye at once seemed to catch sight of her beauty and the richness of her dress. "Who is this beautiful maiden?" they asked one another. "Where did she come from?"

"She is the most beautiful maiden I have ever seen," said a prince. "She shall lead the dance with me."

With a smile and a toss of her hair over her eyes the little girl accepted the prince's invitation and stepped forward into the circle. Her heart became light and her feet merry, and she danced and danced until the sun sank low in the west. But alas! so great was her own happiness that she thought little about her turkeys at home and her promise to them. "Why should I go away from all this pleasure, to my flock of gobbling turkeys?" she said to herself. "I will stay a little longer at least. Just before the sun sets I'll run back to them. Then these people will never know who I am, and I shall like to hear them talk day after day and wonder who the little girl was who joined in their dance."

So the time sped on and another dance was called, and another, and never a moment did the little girl stop. At last she noticed that the sun had set. Then, suddenly breaking away, she ran out of the dance court down the long covered way, up the river path toward home, before any one could see where

she had gone or which path she had taken. All breathless, she arrived at the door of the turkeys' house and looked in. Not one turkey was there. The little girl called and called them. She ran into their house, she looked around, but not one of her beloved turkeys was to be seen. "Where are they?" she kept saying to herself, at the same time calling them with all the voice she had, "Come my turkeys, come, come." But there was no answer. "I must trail them. Perhaps they have gone back to the plains." She ran to the plains, then on to the valley, but her flock of turkeys was far, far away.

After a long, long trail over the plains, up and down the valleys, she came within sound of their voices. "I hear them, I hear my turkeys." Faster and faster ran the little girl until she caught sight of her beloved flock hurrying away toward the woods, round the mountain and on up the valley. She could hear them saying something over and over again. As she drew nearer she called and called to them, but it was all of no use.

They only quickened their steps and spread their wings to help them along. "She has forgotten us," they kept saying. "She is not worthy of better things than those she has been accustomed to. Let us go to the mountains. Our Little Mother is not as good and true as we once thought her." Then they spread their wings and fluttered away over the plains above and were soon lost from sight. The poor little turkey girl put her hands over her face, then she looked down at her dress. Alas! what did she see? Her old clothes, patched and tattered. She was a poor little turkey girl again. Sad at heart she looked toward the valley and gave one loud call, "Oh, my turkeys come back to me, come back."

"Gobble, gobble, gobble," she heard beside her. The poor little girl sat up, rubbed her eyes and looked about her. There were her beloved turkeys gathered around her calling "Gobble, gobble, gobble!" They wanted to go home, for the sun was ready to set and the village people were returning from the festival.

"Oh, my beloved turkeys," said the little girl, when she understood it all. "I would not part with you for all the fine dresses and festivals in the whole world. How glad I am it was only a dream!"

MEADOW FIDDLERS

THE red-legged locust. Oh, my, oh, my!
He plays all day. But why? But why?
You rub your legs with your dusty wings;
Your fiddle shrieks till the welkin rings;
On meadow green, through the livelong day,
You saw and eat till they're bare and gray
Zee-e-e, zee-e-, zee-e-e!

The green katydid. Dear me, dear me!
The finest chap. Just see, just see;
You play so hard and you trill so long,
Your midget wife ne'er can sing a song,
Still you rub your wings in the drollest way
While dancing clover blossoms swing and sway
Zig, zig, z-i-g, zig, zig, z-i-g!

Cone-headed grasshopper, zip-zee, zip-zee,
The insects' clown is he, is he!
From Maine o'er plains to the Rockies found,
With foolscap forehead and shrilling sound,
From bush and bramble your roundelay
Comes sharp and clear through the summer day,
Z-szip-zee. Z-szip, z-szip-zee!

The wee tree cricket. So free, so free!
Sings night and day! What glee, what glee!
Your high held wings make such presto fine
No human skill can compare with thine;
So fast, so shrill, and so wondrous gay,
Such tunes are joy to a dancing fay,
T-ree-ee, t-re-ee, t-re-ee! T-re-ee, t-re-ee, t-re-ee!

Sweet meadow fiddlers, zip, zee, zip, zee!
They fill the earth with glee, with glee!
We greet your coming with fond delight
And gayly hie in the sunshine bright,
Where bees and blossoms and birds all day
Wing, swing, and sing to your joyful lay.
Zip-zip-z-ee! zip-zip-z-ee!

CASTLE FORTUNE

ONE fine morning at sunrise, two strong young men were sauntering along through the fields. As they journeyed toward the east the gray morning mist cleared away in the distance, and there on a very high hill stood a beautiful castle with sparkling windows and glistening towers all bathed in the morning light.

"Come," said one of the youths eagerly, "let us go over to it!"

"What!" exclaimed the other, who was a lazy fellow, "do you not know that it is miles away? I am sure I cannot walk so far."

"Try," said a sweet strange voice.

On turning about they saw a lovely fairy

dressed in gauzy white, holding a golden wand in her hand. She was standing on a magic crystal ball which rolled along with her toward the distant castle. As she passed the travelers, she pointed with her wand toward the east smilingly, and said, "Follow me!"

"That would be easy to do," mumbled the lazy youth, "if one could roll along as you do with no effort." He then threw himself down on the grass to rest.

His companion, however, started off after the fairy as fast as he could run, and catching hold of her floating robe he cried, "Who are you?"

"I am Fortune," she answered. "Yonder is my castle. Follow me there. Waste no time, and if you reach the castle before midnight I'll receive you as a friend. But remember! If you come one moment after the last stroke of midnight, the door will be closed against you."

With these words the fairy drew her robe about her and rolled swiftly on in the morn-

ing breeze. And the crystal ball sparkled, sparkled in the sunlight.

The youth now hurried back to his companion and said breathlessly, "Yonder is the Castle of Fortune. Come! Let us go!"

"What nonsense!" said the lazy youth. "With a good horse one might get there easily, but for my part I don't intend to try to walk all that way."

"Farewell, then," said his friend, and away he started briskly with his eyes fixed steadily on the distant towers. The lazy youth sighed wearily and threw himself down on the soft grass. "If only good luck would show me an easy way to get there," he murmured. "How beautiful the castle looks!" He then stretched himself out and fell fast asleep. In a little while he was awakened by something like a warm breeze blowing in his ear. He slowly rubbed his eyes and yawned aloud. Then he heard the neighing of a horse, and turning, he saw standing near a beautiful milk white steed all saddled and bridled!

"Good luck," he cried. "Come here, my

fine friend. You and I will soon reach the castle." Then he jumped into the saddle and started off at a fine gait.

He soon passed his comrade and called out, "What do you think of my steed?"

The other did not speak, but nodded cheerily and kept on at a steady pace.

About midday the horse and rider reached the summit of a hill. In the distance the castle towers shone brightly against the clear blue sky. Presently the horse turned into a shady grove on the hillside and stopped.

"A very good idea!" exclaimed the lazy man. "'Make haste slowly' is good wisdom. This shady slope is a fine place to rest awhile, and my appetite is keen enough to enjoy the luncheon I have in my pocket." So, jumping off, he found a cool shady nook and stretched himself out on the grass.

After he had eaten his savory sandwich he felt so drowsy that he soon fell into a sound sleep. What a pleasant sleep he had! He dreamed he was in Castle Fortune resting on downy cushions. Every wish he had was

granted! Soft strains of music soothed him, while brilliant fireworks all crimson and gold were set off in his honor. This continued for some time, when suddenly the explosion of a beautiful Roman candle awoke him. He sat up rubbing his eyes. In the west the sun was sinking, and he could hear the song of a traveler in the valley below! "I must have been asleep a long while!" he murmured. "It is high time to be off. Ready, my steed! Where are you?"

He whistled and shouted again and again, but no steed came. An old bony gray donkey browsing on the hilltop was the only creature in sight. "Better a donkey than nothing," the lazy man thought. So he walked slowly over to the place where the beast was grazing, and mounted him.

After some urging, the donkey set off at a slow jog. The lazy man soon found that this kind of traveling was very uncomfortable. The donkey trudged slowly on. Soon it began to grow dark. In the distance he could see that the castle was being lighted up. How

beautiful it looked. He was becoming anxious. If only the donkey would move a little faster. But instead he seemed to be going slower and slower, slower and slower, until in the midst of a thick wood the beast stood still and refused to move. The rider coaxed and threatened and urged and kicked. It was of no use. The donkey refused to move. At last the lazy man was thoroughly aroused. He struck the beast a hard blow with his fist, screaming, "Get on, I say." Up went the donkey's heels and over his head into the briers and stones went the rider. What a plight to be in! He was bruised and sore and bewildered. He sat up and tried to collect his thoughts. Ah! There in the distance the lights were shining in Castle Fortune. Oh, for a soft comfortable couch on which to rest his aching bones. The stubborn old donkey! Where could he be?

He crept about in every direction, hoping to find his donkey, but after tearing his clothes and bruising himself he gave up the search. Suddenly his hand struck something that

felt a little like a saddle. It was mounted on something soft and slimy.

He hesitated. Castle Fortune's clock was striking. He counted the strokes. "Eleven o'clock!" he exclaimed in amazement. He threw himself into the queer saddle. "This is rather comfortable," he exclaimed as he leaned against a high back. How slowly the creature moved. At last they reached a clearing, where a long straight road led directly to Castle Fortune with its beautiful towers and its windows ablaze with lights.

The sight of the castle filled him with longing. He turned his attention for a minute to the strange creature he was riding. Horror! He was mounted on a huge snail, quite as large as a calf. No wonder they had crept along at a snail's pace.

One! The great clock struck the first stroke of the midnight hour. He pushed both heels into his steed's soft sides. In an instant the snail drew his head into the shell and rolled over on the ground.

Two! struck the great clock. Had the

lazy man taken to his heels he might even now have reached the castle before the last stroke of the great clock. But no! There he stood filled with regret and fear. "A beast! A beast!" he cried, "Oh, for any kind of a beast to carry me to the castle!"

Three! What was moving near him? Was it the long lost steed? Without further thought he jumped into something like a low saddle. His heart leaped as he looked up! There in the open door of Castle Fortune stood his friend waving his cap and beckoning to him.

Four! chimed the great clock. The queer steed began to rouse himself.

Five! The creature moved slowly forward.

Six! What an awkward steed it was.

Seven! Which way were they going?

Eight! What! Were they moving backward? Impossible! He would jump off and run.

Nine! To our rider's great surprise he found he was held fast by the creature's claws

which extended on all sides. Horror! He was riding on a giant crab!

Ten! Backward they moved!

Eleven! Farther and farther they were going away from the castle.

TWELVE! The castle doors shut with a clang. Castle Fortune's doors were closed forever to the lazy man.

A LITTLE DUTCH GARDEN

I PASSED by a garden, a little Dutch garden,
Where useful and pretty things grew;
Heartsease and tomatoes, and pinks and potatoes,
And lilies and onions and rue.

I saw in that garden, that little Dutch garden,
A chubby Dutch man with a spade;
And a rosy Dutch frau with a shoe like a scow,
And a flaxen-haired little Dutch maid.

There grew in that garden, that little Dutch garden,
Blue flag flowers lovely and tall;
And early blush roses, and little pink posies,
And Gretchen was fairer than all.

My heart's in that garden, that little Dutch
garden,
It tumbled right in as I passed,
'Mid 'wildering mazes of spinach and daisies,
And Gretchen is holding it fast.

TRUE FRIENDSHIP

OWN yonder by the thrashing floors, where the husbandmen thrash out their corn, some large black ants once established themselves and built their nests. They settled themselves in that place in order to be near good and wholesome food, such as wheat, barley, and maize, which they carried off whether the farmers liked it or not.

These ants prospered and became so numerous that they formed themselves into a kingdom, and had their own king.

The king, who was an old ant, was very wise and courageous. As he was a real king, he wore a golden crown upon his head and held a golden scepter in his hand.

His crown was a small piece of round gold wire, which fitted his head splendidly. His soldiers in one of their raids had found it in a country maiden's casket. They took possession of it, and presented it to their sovereign. In the same way they had come across the scepter, which they saw one day on the thrashing floor, and appropriated in like manner. It was nothing more than a little gold watch key which had dropped off the chain of the village steward, but that was of no consequence, because as soon as the royal hand grasped it, it derived value from that circumstance alone.

The king had his own carriage. It was made out of a nutshell, and was drawn by two swift and well-harnessed beetles, who, like all royal horses, were well trained. The king generally drove out, because his majesty was now so aged that he had become quite white and feeble.

So you see that he had every blessing, and his people loved him very much. But he was not happy for he was weary and no longer

found pleasure in anything. Perhaps this was because he had so much.

One day there was a great tumult in the ant kingdom. A regiment of soldiers, which had gone out upon an excursion, returned after a brilliant victory, and brought back great spoils, and also four prisoners.

The king, from the balcony of his palace, with his crown on his head and his scepter in his hand, greeted his army as it marched before him in great order, saluting him with, "Long live the King!" Then he ordered that the four prisoners should be brought before him, that he might try them.

The first captive was a spider.

"What is your name?" asked the king.

"Spider," she answered humbly, and did homage with her two forelegs.

"Where were you born?" said the king.

"I was born in the mill's dark cellar."

After many other questions the king again said, "What art do you know?"

"I know how to weave," said the spider. "No one can surpass me in weaving. I am

the very, very best weaver in the whole wide world."

"Good!" said the king. "You shall weave some cloth for my palace, and if your work is satisfactory, I will set you free; if not, I shall hand you over to my soldiers to be cut to pieces. Shut her up in prison and let her begin at once."

As the king decreed this, he lowered his scepter and struck it on the ground, when immediately soldiers dragged off the spider by her feet, and put her in a cell.

The second prisoner, which was a bee, was then brought forward. The king in like manner questioned her. She said her name was "Bee," and did him obeisance. Upon his inquiring where she was born, she replied, "In a hive, which was a house built for a number of bees to live in."

"Do you know any trade or profession?" inquired the king.

"Certainly, your majesty, I know how to make a most delicious food. No one can excel me."

"Good!" said the king. "You shall make all the sweetmeats that are required at the forthcoming festival, when the peasants spread their thrashing floors. If I am pleased with them, I shall release you; but if not, I shall order my soldiers to cut off your head. Shut her up in prison, and let her begin at once."

Again he knocked with his scepter, and the detachment of soldiers led the bee off to prison. Then the king said: "Bring in the two other prisoners together, that we may finish with them; for I have other business of the kingdom on hand."

The third and fourth captives were brought in together. One was a grasshopper, and the other a cricket.

When they were asked the customary questions as to their places of birth, the first replied, "At the roots of a bush of thyme." And the other, "In the air!"

Then the king proceeded with: "And what arts do you know?"

"I know how to sing," cried the cricket.

"And I, how to dance," said the grasshopper.

"Splendid arts, truly, both the one and the other," called out the king in a rage, and he knocked with his scepter so loudly that all his courtiers and soldiers, as well as the two prisoners, were frightened. "Since you know nothing, you are plainly of no use. I shall have you cut up, the pair of you."

"Please, your majesty," said the cricket boldly, while the grasshopper trembled with fear, "can we do nothing? Do we know nothing? Because this lady and myself cannot weave like the spider or make sweetmeats like the bee? We are worthy people, and the whole world loves us. We amuse all the insects on both hill and plain; we make life in the long summer days when the sun is hot a little less wearisome; then I sing, and she dances, and for those who see and hear us time soon passes. Allow us the same privilege before your majesty, and you can then judge if we be deserving of freedom or death."

The king was not hard-hearted, and after hearing this plea of the cricket, he said, "I grant your request. I have a little time in which to divert myself, and if you can succeed in giving me pleasure in a short space of time, I will give you both your liberty, and grant you each any favor that you may ask."

He gave orders to release them. The cricket then began to sing with all the skill that she possessed, and the grasshopper danced at the same time. Neither the king nor any of his courtiers or soldiers had ever heard so sweet a voice, or seen so artistic a dance. His majesty was delighted; his old face beamed all over, and he struck merrily with his scepter, and shouted: "Well done! Bravo! I'll free you — I'll free you. I only request that whenever you have the time or the inclination, you will come and amuse me and my subjects a little. Labor is good, but life wants some few pleasures also. I told you that I would grant you any favor that you asked for. Ask now what you will."

Then the cricket said pleadingly, "Your

majesty, I ask this favor — that the poor spider may be released."

"You have a good heart," answered the king; "be it so." And he turned to the grasshopper. "And what favor do you ask, madam dancer?"

"May it please your majesty to release the bee?"

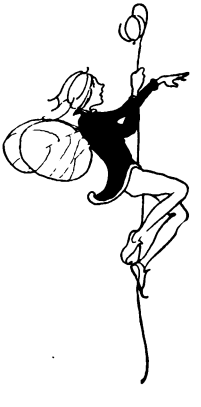
"And you, too, have a good heart; your wish is granted." And the king ordered the release of the prisoners.

They were immediately set free, and all the ants conducted them out of the ant hills, while the cricket, full of joy, sang along the road:

"Zi zi zi and zi zi zi,
May our lord the king live joyfully,
And all his people as well as he."

Merry have we met,
And merry have we been;
Merry let us part,
And merry meet again.

OLD RIME.



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